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J. HARVEY REED

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CHAS. H. O'NEIL

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FORTY YEARS

—: A :—

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER

Thrilling Tales of the Rail

BY

J. HARVEY REED

PRESCOTT, WASH.:
CHAS. H. O'NEIL, PUBLISHER
1913

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DEDICATION

To the brave and loyal hearted men who follow the life of the rail, this book is lovingly dedicated.

PREFACE.

These tales have to do with the life of an engineer; the man who occupies the engine cab, and with hand on the throttle, and eyes on the track ahead, on steam guage and air, and here, there and everywhere about his engine, with mind alert and nerves tense, rides his speeding iron horse, while holding the lives and safety of many in his hands. It is an awful responsibility that rests upon the man at the throttle, and no one in the world realizes it so much as he. Take a fast passenger train for instance; the engineer riding a monster of iron and steel weighing 200,000 pounds, carrying a steam pressure of 200 pounds to the square inch, goes dashing through the night, trailing behind seven, eight, nine or ten cars loaded with human freight, at a speed of forty to eighty miles an hour, dashing around sharp curves, down heavy grades, across high bridges; every revolution of his engine drivers carry their dangers; so many things can happen that will bring death and destruction. The speed with which the iron monster, with its hissing steam and fretful exhaust, dashes along the rails allows only a breath for action if something looms on the track ahead. Fifty, one hundred, one hundred fifty feet is only a second or so in the speed of that train, and the horror of a plunge down an embankment can only be appreciated by him who has so plunged.

These tales that are unfolded herein cover a period of 43 years of railroad history and change. Forty-three years ago the air brake and automatic coupler were not dreamed of, locomotives and cars were mere pygmies of what they are today. Within this time railroad mileage has increased many fold, and J. Harvey Reed has followed, through all the years, this wonderful evolution.

This is not a romance, but a truthful recital from real life.

This book was prompted by the importunities of Mr. Reed's railroad friends, who realizing what this veteran of the rail had experienced through the long span of years of his service, demanded that he commit the story of his life to print.

In compliance with the demand of his friends, Mr.

Reed associated himself with the undersigned who committed to writing the thrilling stories herein contained.

Whatever shortcomings there are in the book belong to the writer, who feels that he has fallen far short of doing justice to the old hero of the rail.

Trusting, however, that the reader may gain a modicum of the pleasure in perusing that I have in writing the tales, I submit them, with all their literary faults, to his tender mercies, on behalf of Mr. Reed.

The writer cannot close this without expressing his deep appreciation for numerous courtesies extended him—in the way of technical information—by Engineers Scott W. Butler, James Morgan, Conductors Dave Wright, Gene Wright and Jack Wright, Charley Fay, Jim McKimmey, H. W. Cameron, and a host of other good chaps who did so much toward making this publication possible.

CHAS. H. O'NEIL

Prescott, Washington, December 26, 1911.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

In issuing this, the second edition of Forty Years a Locomotive Engineer, the author feels deeply the kindly reception given his work.

J. HARVEY REED.

Prescott, Washington, February 1, 1913.

Forty Years
a
Locomotive Engineer

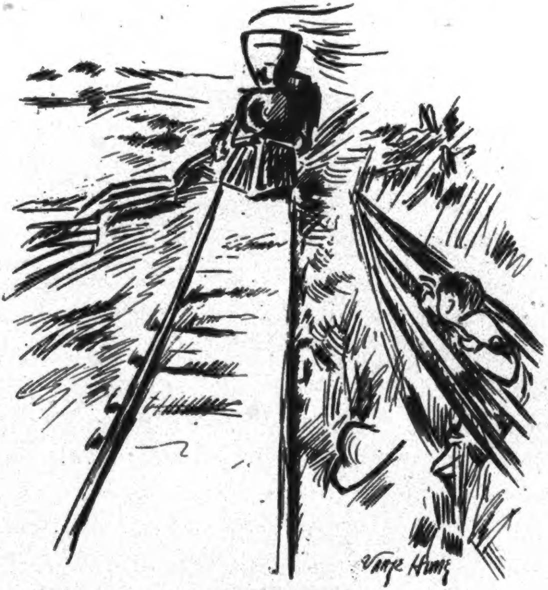
We are prone to accept the good things of this life as a matter of course and with very little thought as to whys and wherefores. We board a railroad train sumptuous in appointment, with every provision for our safety and comfort carefully looked after; we are whirled away over mountains and plains, through fertile regions and desert wastes, across mighty rivers and through great canyons. The night may be of inky blackness and outside the storm may rage and beat, but the passenger, snuggled down on his splendidly upholstered seat, or occupying a comfortable berth knows nothing of the elements so far as any personal discomfort is concerned, and he has little thought of the dangers that lurk along the rail or the sturdy men who are ever on the alert to guard him from harm, while they rush him hundreds of miles through the stormy night. The general public has but a hazy idea of the organization that cares for him from the time he steps on a train until he disembarks at his destination; he knows naught of the dispatchers at their noisy keys with their train sheets before them tracing the trains in motion over their division, providing for meets, looking after delays and guarding against collisions; to the average person the conductor is merely the man who collects the tickets, deals out information to the traveler, and at stop intervals shouts, "All aboard." Brakemen appear to be just baggage hustlers, the engineer a greasy looking chap that sits in cab with his head out of the window, while the fireboy—well, he is hardly known at all. Few there are who appreciate that "railroading" is one of the most complex of all businesses, requiring on the part of the men who follow it the most detailed knowledge, alertness of mind, activity of body, and a high sense of duty; their visions must be the keenest, their hearing attuned to the most sensitive sounds; they must be brave and true. The conductor has spent years in active train work before he becomes qualified to handle and look after a passenger train; the brakemen who loiter through the coaches must have good knowledge of the business and must ever be prepared for emergencies; the fire boy on the engine, commonly called the "tallowpot" in railroad vernacular, is a muscular, perspiring chap with an ability for hard work and a heart as big as a steam dome; the Eagle Eye, the engineer, the man at the throttle, the eyes of the train, is the heroic figure of railroad life. This picture represents the passenger branch, and these chaps have all one day belonged to the larger class of freight men, the rawhiders, the happy-go-lucky chaps with the monster engines, and the long trains; brave, gallant, lovable chaps. It is all a spectacular, fascinating life, a life of thrills, a life of movement, shrill whistles, clanging bells, hissing steam, swaying cars, swinging signals, where death and accident are forever stalking at one's heels, yet it is a life of buoyancy, vigor, and filled with laughter and good fellowship. Every day brings its incidents and most every month its tragedy. It's a life that brave men love, and one that cowards cannot follow;

it is filled to overflowing with romance and hardship, good humor and a beautiful and inspiring flow of cuss words. Yet, through all and above all, millions of people and billions of wealth are carried safely and comfortably over millions of miles every year, through storm and stress, around washouts and landslides, through dark tunnels, and giant forests, over verdant hills and barren plains, through crowded cities and across vast stretches of farm lands; here and there a passenger meets death on the rail, but these instances are comparatively rare, when the thousands of trains in daily operation every minute of the twenty-four hours is considered. The facts are, however, for every passenger killing wreck, there are thousands of hair-breadth escapes and "close calls" of which the passenger never hears; a broken flange on a wheel, a climbing brake, an over-lap order, a burning bridge, a crystalized driver axle, a landslide, a misplaced switch, defective air, and a thousand and one other minor yet serious things that are capable of sending a trainload of people to their deaths, if the watchfulness and care of the train crew does not avert the catastrophe.

The man who spends a lifetime on the rail has lived a romance and has experienced so much danger that when old age or physical disability demand his retirement, life pales with ennui, and the "old 'un" longs with a hungry yearning for the smell of the boiler head and the swing of the "high ball."

SEES HIS FIRST TRAIN.

It was along about the year 1852, when J. Harvey Reed was aged about five years, and the Indiana branch of the Pennsylvania railroad was being extended from Blairville Junction to Indiana, Indiana county, Pennsylvania; there had been considerable interest excited in the neighborhood over the advent of the railroad. One day Harvey and his older brother, George, went down the right of way to the end of the track, a distance of about one mile. When they arrived at the scene the work train and engine were down the track several miles, and the two boys waited with baited breaths the return of the train and their first sight of a locomotive. It wasn't long before the noisy whistle announced the approach of the work train, and Harvey, no longer able to restrain himself, ran for a near-by worm fence and over its protecting heights he went into the tall grass on the further side between the rails of the fence, from where he watched the approach of the iron horse, as it came snorting and puffing up to the track terminal. He looked with awe



Sees His First Train

and wonder upon the steaming monster, and the engineer, who leaned far out of the cab window, appeared to the small boy in the grass as a veritable god. As his eyes drank in the sight it was then that the little five-year-old boy promised himself that some day he would become an engineer, and that ambition stayed with him through the succeeding years. Up to his twentieth year Harvey's lot was cast upon the farm where his parents resided. The new road ran directly in front of his father's farm home, and Reed station was located on the old farmstead. For fifteen years there was hardly a train dashed by but what was noted by the farmer boy with an ambition for the life of an engineer.

STARTS RAILROAD CAREER.

Barely reaching the twentieth mile post of life's journey, the young lad on the 11th day of March, 1867, kissed his dear old mother good-bye, and with a last lingering look at the old home, pulled out for the West. The story will now be told in the first person.

I went direct to Illinois, where I put in the time at miscellaneous work until April, 1868, when I secured a job as fireman on the Toledo, Wabash & Western, at Springfield, running west to Quincy and east to Danville. It was while holding down this job that I first experienced a wreck. It was between Philo and Tolona; we were pulling a freight train. It was early morning and a dense fog hovered over the marshy valley, making it impossible to see a car length ahead. As we rushed down a considerable grade aiming to get up momentum to help us up a stiff grade on the other side of a narrow valley into which we were descending, our engine was rocking from side to side and our long string of box cars were staggering along after us for the world like a bunch of racing drunken men. As developments proved there was another train on the opposite side of the valley heading toward us, doing the very same thing that we were doing: making a run for the hill. The two trains met without a moment's warning in the valley. A mighty crash, the grinding of wheels, the hissing of escaping steam, and in the wink of an eye our engine reared upon its "hind feet" and literally jumped atop and over the opposing engine, landing fifty feet from the track. My engineer, Bill World, and myself were hurled clear of the wreck and suffered only minor injuries. Three of the train crew were killed and two badly crippled. The wrecked trains were loaded with merchandise and grain, and there were boots and shoes, tea, coffee and sugar scattered over ten acres in the vicinity of the wreck, and both trains were completely demolished.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF IT ALL.

It was Christmas Eve, and big, jovial, kind-hearted Billy Silsby, engineer of the Cannon-Ball between Decatur and St. Louis, was due out at 7 o'clock on his run. Before he was called, Billy had been down town and had purchased a beautiful dinner set as a present for his wife at Decatur. He had the dishes carefully boxed and placed in the baggage car of his train. Meantime at home his wife had gone to Billy's tailor, who had his measurments, and had a fine suit of clothes made for her husband. Taking the clothes home on Christmas Eve she arranged them on a dummy in the parlor. She had the home beautifully decorated in appropriate decorations, and there was a host of friends present to welcome Billy in from his run, and spend a happy Christmas Eve with the family. Everything had been arranged at home, and wife and guests were waiting for 10:05 when Billy should whistle in. The hour came, but there was no whistle. "Well, Billy was a little late tonight thought all." Ten thirty, eleven o'clock, and still no sound of that familiar whistle. Then came a knock at the door, and the startled guests and wife were informed that there had been a wreck up the road and the Cannon-Ball was ditched, and Billy was badly injured.

While the guests were gathering at his home to welcome him, Billy Silsby was skimming along toward Decatur on an "on-time" clip. It was the custom at that time to send caboose bounces West as sections of passenger trains in order to get them through quickly. On this particular night the westbound passenger was running in four sections, and Billy, running against these trains, had orders to meet sections one and two at a certain station, and sections three and tour at another station further along. He had passed one and two, and duly met section three, and expected to meet the fourth section at two stations further on; but there was a lap in the orders, for the fourth section had orders to meet the Cannon-Ball at B, while the Cannon-Ball's orders called for the meet at C. Section four was just getting into the siding at B when Billy, with thoughts of home and a happy Christmas in his mind, came rolling around a curve and down a steep grade at sixty miles an hour into B before the fourth section had cleared the main line. Just as they rounded the curve into B the fireman shouted to Billy, asking where they were to meet the fourth section. At the moment Billy saw the train ahead, and as his own train bore down with the certainty of a collision before it, he shouted back, "right here!" and jumped. At the moment the two engines came together with a mighty impact; the peaceful valley was turned into a scene of wreckage, and the cries of frightened and injured passengers filled the air. Poor Billy did not clear his engine when he attempted to leap, and his body was found pinioned beneath it with life extinct. His happy home was transformed into a house of mourning, and never again did Billy whistle into his home station.

AN ENGINE BLOWS UP.

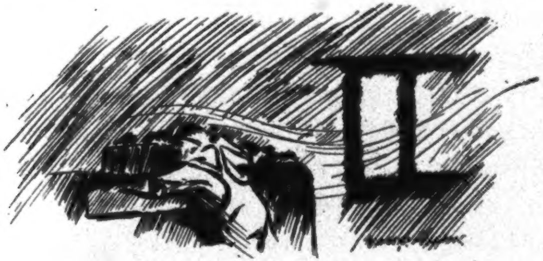
Johnnie Moore was probably the most popular engineer who ever pulled a throttle on the Wabash. Everybody seemed to love him. Big, rugged, good humored, and kindly, with a kind greeting and happy smile for everybody he met, and there was probably no man in Springfield, Illinois, better known than he. Johnnie's run was between Springfield and Danville.

Pulling a westbound passenger one beautiful Sunday morning in July, 1870, he was at the foot of Harristown grade, when suddenly his engine became enveloped in steam, there was a deafening report, and the fastly moving engine was lifted into the air, and turning end for end came back to earth with her boiler a battered wreck. Johnnie Moore had been carried by the force of the explosion through the air, and far out on the right of way, where he was found with his neck broken. His fireman was found on the roof of the third car back, and his body had been ripped as with a knife. Not another soul on the train was injured, nor was there so much as a derailment of any car of the train—a most extraordinary fact which tends to make the occurrence one of the most unusual in the annals of railroad catastrophes.

As an evidence of the popularity of Johnnie Moore, it might be stated that his funeral was said to be the largest ever held in Springfield, with the exception of that of Abraham Lincoln, the martyred president.

A LUCKY FALL.

In the old days before railroads were as well regulated as they are today; when train crews were run on a system of right in and right out, and oft-times men were worked forty or forty-eight hours without



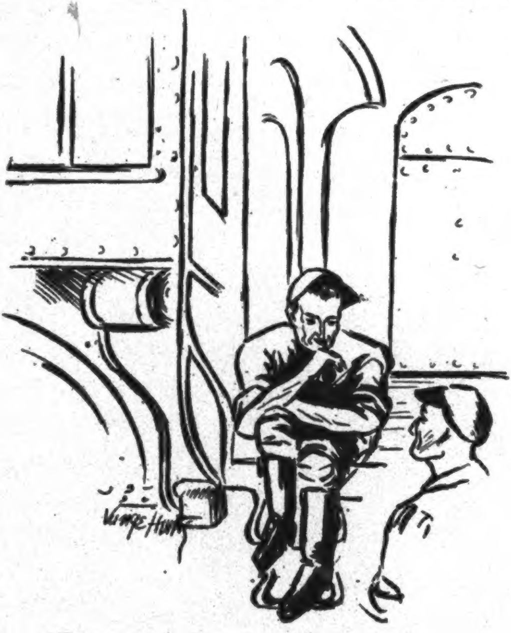
Crawled Along the Tender

rest, it frequently happened that serious results followed these physical strains. On one of these occasions in the early 70's, when I was a fireboy on the Wabash, running out of Tolona, Illinois, I was out one night and had been without rest for forty hours. We were crawling at about twenty-five miles an hour, when becoming hungry for a chew of tobacco I started back along the side of the tender toward the tank box, where I had a plug of tobacco in the pocket of a pair of overalls, which were in the box. It was the dark hour before dawn and I, as can be imagined, was so drowsy and worn, that both mind and body were sluggish. As I picked my way along the side of the tender on the narrow moulding that afforded a sort of toe-hold for my foot, holding to the top of the tender with my hands, I was only about half awake. I reached the tender box—which in those days was kept to one side instead of at the rear as now, and lifting the lid with one hand and keeping it up by placing the left elbow in the box permitting the upraised hand to support the lid, while the right hand searched the pockets of the overalls for the tobacco.

While this operation was being performed, I became so drowsy that I simply let go all holds and fell backwards off the speeding engine, landing on my shoulders on the ground and turning a half dozen summersaults after striking terra firma. Fortunately the track was being ballasted with sand, and great stacks of it were scattered along the right of way, and it was into one of these piles of sand that the fireboy landed. Before I recovered from the slight shock I suffered from the fall, the train of freight cars had passed on for nearly a mile; when reaching the foot of a sharp ascent, the Eagle Eye, Frank Hapwell, glancing at his steam guage to see how she looked for the grade, and noting that the indicator pointed in the wrong direction, looked around for his fireboy on the engine deck. Noting that he was not there, the engineer concluded that the fireman was out on the running board. Crossing to the fireman's side the engineer glanced out on the board and found no one there. Then, becoming alarmed, he called for brakes, stopped, and then put the train in back motion, after blowing the back-up signal. I plainly heard the signal as I picked myself up and started toward the train. I was soon aboard the engine and now thoroughly awakened, I soon had the steam indicator pointing right, and the train went into the terminal on time, with a mighty wideawake engine boy on the deck.

A SIEGE OF SICKNESS.

It was in the fall of 1870, while still a tallowpot, I was taken ill with pneumonia. There were no railroad hospitals in those days, and I was confined to my room in a hotel at Quincy, Illinois. I had a capital of $275.00 saved up. My illness was severe and prolonged, and my physician despaired of saving my life. For weeks and weeks I battled with death. My doctor finally informed my friends that one of my lungs was gone and that I never would fully recover. During the course of this time, my means became exhausted, and when I finally had recovered sufficiently to get out of bed, I found that some miscreant had stolen all of my clothing. When some of the boys heard of this they supplied me with a miscellaneous assortment of clothing—coat and trousers that were far from a "paper-on-the-wall" fit, a pair of dancing pumps for my feet, a an old slouch hat for headgear. Robed in this fashion I could hobble around the room and wait for returning strength with patience and hope. One day while lying on the bed, Conductor Horace Morgan called to see me, and the sympathetic conductor, after visiting a little while, got up and left, but unknown to me he left a ten-dollar bill on the bed, as he took a sad farewell. But my time had not come, and in the course of a few weeks more I was able to don my incongruous assortment of clothing and get back to work. My garments, however, were ill adapted to the work of a fireman, especially those hen-skin pumps, and one day a burly, but kind-hearted brakeman, riding on the engine noticed the thin shoes, and inquired why I did not wear more suitable footgear. I informed him that I hoped to get a pair of boots after pay-day. Without a word the brakeman climbed back over the tender to his train and soon returned with a pair of "box-car" boots, which he presented to me with the kindest of intentions. The boots had been "lifted" out of a shipment some time or other—hence the name "box-car" boots—and in the act the lifter did not take sufficient pains to choose mates, hence one of these boots was a number ten, the other a number eight, and both for the right foot. My size was nine, and it became necessary to split the number eight down the instep before I could



Feet Points In the Same Direction

get into it at all, and then it pinched my toes dreadfully. The number ten was all right to get into, being a size too large, but being designed for the right foot, it gave my left foot a rather awkward appearance, and invariably indicated that I was headed where I was not, and was the source of considerable amusement and joshing among the boys. This joshing became particularly pronounced when I got a new engineer named Billy Robinson. Billy was a good-natured sort of a chap and loved to josh. When we were out on a run I used to catch him watching me and my awkward feet out of the corner of his eye, as I worked on the deck. After he had watched until he could stand the pressure of his mirth no longer, he would stick his head out of the window and explode with laughter; but, through it all, I stayed with my ill-mated boots until pay-day permitted me to replace them.

PROMOTED.

Robust health came back to me on the wings of time, and the tenor of my way as smooth as could be hoped for by a tallowpot.

In August, 1871, our master mechanic on the Wabash, T. G. Gorman, a typical Down-East Yankee, with Santa Claus whiskers, white as the driven snow, but dyed as black as the raven's wing, called in a bunch of us tallowpots for examination and promotion.

In those days examinations were not as technical as they are today; aurists, occulists, and other breeds of physical examiners were unknown, and appliances were not dreamed of; there were no common standard rules, but each road having independent rules, examinations were largely based upon the whim of the examiner.

On this particular, and, to us, important occasion, we were up before Mr. Gorman, and as it happened I was the first he turned to as sixteen of us faced him in line.

It was his custom to invariably address a fireman as "Sonny," and now, turning to me, said, "Sonny, if you were running a locomotive, what tools would you deem necessary to carry with you?"

My response was, "Mr. Gorman, if I were running one of those old scrap piles on the St. Louis division, I would want a whole back shop built on my tank."

Whereupon my examiner said, "Sonny, I will excuse you;" and I left the office feeling that my frankness of speech had lost me a chance of promotion, and I regretted my foolish speech, and the more I thought of it the more I regretted. My chance of occupying the four dollar side of the cab seemed lost in a maze of presumptuous speech.

Imagine my surprise when about three o'clock the next morning the call boy roused me up and handed me an unsealed letter addressed to Mr. Knowlton, general foreman of the Decatur shops, which set forth that the foreman was to use the bearer, J. Harvey Reed, as engineer on the St. Louis division.

Shortly after this Mr. Gorman spoke to Frank Hopewell, the engineer for whom I had been firing, saying: "Frank, I called in that red-headed fireman of yours to examine him for promotion and asked what tools he would carry if he were running an engine," and then he quoted my response, and went on to say, "I have just sent him up to Decatur to run one of the scrap heaps, and we will see how he gets along."

Well, I am glad to say that, nothwithstanding his freshness, the red-headed kid got along for a matter of three years, when a change in management on the Wabash took place.

A Jacob Joehan succeeded Mr. Gorman as master mechanic, and very shortly afterward some eighteen engineers lost their heads for the most trivial reasons and were replaced by men who followed the new master mechanic from the Missouri Pacific.

The charge against me was for fast running. The charge was ridiculous, for it was a well known fact that when one left a station on that road he was immediately due at the next, and raw-hiding was demanded of every engineer, and every fellow understood this. But Mr. Joehan rightfully considered that a poor excuse was better than none when one is about to attach a tin can.

TO THE ILLINOIS-MIDLAND.

Bidding good-bye to the old Wabash, I went to the Illinois-Midland, and secured a run between Terre Haute, Indiana, and Peoria, Illinois, one hundred and seventy-six miles. The road bed consisted of the right of way and two streaks of rust reaching its length, and had been built without money and on "jawbone," as the saying was.

I worked here for two years without experiencing the joy of a pay-day.

The road's financial status was as full of promises as a rainbow, and pay rolls were a hope deferred so long that one got accustomed to living on rarified promises.

If one was a good diplomat he could get an order once in a while from the so-called paymaster for fifteen or twenty dollars drawn on some company agent at a big station, then if he were endowed with a diplomacy of a Benjamin Franklin order, he might succeed in getting the agent to cash the order.

Our board bills were settled by the landlords sending in their bills direct to the company. This system was worked so that our board would cost us forty to fifty dollars per month.

When in need of clothes the paymaster, on demand, would issue requisitions on some Jew clothier at

Peoria, who in turn would charge us exorbitant prices for our purchases.

Of course, it was a case of rake-off for everybody concerned except the man who did the work.

It was some time before I "took advantage" of the order system, but finally I went to the official and secured one of the regulation orders. It called for forty-five dollars worth of clothing.

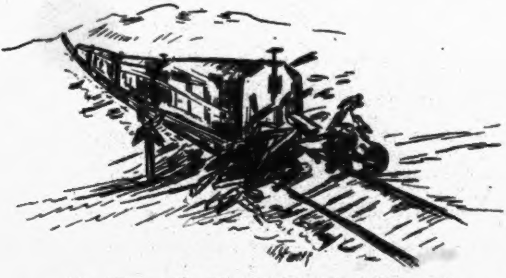
I then went to Peoria to the designated Jew's shop, and, without presenting the order or identifying myself, made my purchases on a cash basis. During the course of the trading the clerk asked me where I was from and I didn't hesitate to lie when I informed him that I was a school teacher from Redmond. He showed me every attention, but when I finally got my several packages safely tucked under my arm and produced my order, it was worth the price of admission to see the look of consternation on that Jew's face. That son of Israel started in to upbraid me for my deception, but I handed him a stop signal, and in a few choice words told him where to head in, and with my "cash bargains" under my arm walked out of the store.

while the two Jews, with awe-stricken faces, watched my tail lights disappear down the street.

Such were conditions financially on this "uster was" road.

A PECULIAR ACCIDENT.

One day I left Terre Haute for Peoria, 176 miles, pulling a freight train of 25 cars—be it remembered that this was in the days of the link and pin and before the air brake. We were sailing along in the good old way, when, arriving within about three miles of Arcola, the four rear cars of my train broke away; a fact I did not at once discover; the wild cars followed the main train, but did not roll quite so fast, and as



He Thought the Train Had Passed

we crossed a wagon crossing the rear cars must have been several hundred feet to the rear. At any rate, at the crossing old Squire Williams was waiting for the train to pass so that he might proceed with his fine team of mules and wood wagon. The main section passed, and the old man started his team across the track when the wild cars came charging down upon him, crushing his wagon to smithereens and horribly mutilating the old man; the mules escaped uninjured. It was now that I discovered that my train was in two, and I started backing up the track to pick it up, when I soon came upon the scene of the wreck. My conductor, John Alexander, lead me to the remains of the poor old man lying on the track. I informed the conductor that we would place the remains in the caboose and back up to Arcola and notify the authorities. The captain demurred, stating that it was against the law to touch the body before the arrival of the coroner. I told him law or no law we had to go back, and I did not propose to back that train over the remains of that old man. Calling to a passenger who had been riding in the caboose, I got him to assist me in removing the remains to one side clear of the track, and then leaving the passenger to guard the remains we backed up to Arcola and notified the authorities and the superintendent. The old man lived but a half a mile from where he met his death, and it was a heart rending scene when his only daughter arrived at the spot and saw her poor old father mutilated and dead.

MISSING A BLOW-UP.

It always appeared to me that the hand of fate regulates and determines things for us railroaders, if not for others.

For two years I had driven an old decrepit engine, rumpty bang, bumpty bump, in a happy-go-lucky sort of way over that old road bed without any untoward incident, but during the winter of '76 I decided to take a lay-off and run down to Philadelphia to see the big show, visit the old home and have a general good time.

In those days every engineer had his own engine which he handled exclusively. It so happened that my old steamboat, the Six-spot, had to go to the shop for extensive repairs and this gave me my chance for my lay-off.

I had been gone several weeks when the repairs on the Six having been completed, the engine was turned out of the shop, and was turned over to the Engineer Louie Velsar, who started out with her pulling a freight train in charge of Conductor Chas. Laun.

Among the crew was a brakeman named Laun Allen, one of the finest singers I ever heard, and a mighty fine boy. This trip was his first after his marriage.

Shortly after pulling out of Paris station the engine boiler exploded, and this represents the most complete destruction of a locomotive that I know of. The boiler was literally blown to pieces, the drivers were broken into bits and the driver axles were bent and twisted as if they had been hairpins.

The engineer, with body dismembered, was thrown two hundred feet back and away from the scene on one side of the track, while the fireman was hurtled an equal distance on the other side. Allen who was supposed to have been standing in the fireman's gangway, was thrown several car lengths to the rear.

I have always felt that I escaped this disaster by a hair's breadth as it were, for in a day or two more I would have been on the engine. But after all, what's the use of borrowing trouble?

I remained with Midland for a year after returning from Philadelphia, and when I quit I had fifteen dollars in cash and one of those infernal vouchers for five hundred twenty dollars. I sold the voucher for twenty cents on the dollar, and struck out for pastures new, and went to Topeka, Kansas, where I entered the services of the Santa Fe.

GETS MARRIED.

It was here that I met a young lady whom I had previously known at Pairs, Illinois, Miss Eva S. Knight, by name.

I had long thought very much of this lady, and when I met her out here determined that it was time for me to get married if I could get the party of the second part to consent to such an arrangement. This lady then in my eyes was the best girl in the world, and she soon became my wife. Now, with forty years of experience to back me up, I still have no reason to change my opinion of her.

TO NEW MEXICO.

I had been married but a short time when I was sent to the front on construction—the Santa Fe was then building through New Mexico.

There were no hotel accommodations, and I had to carry my blankets and sleep on the ground, eat in a tent, and rough it generally. I didn't like this sort of thing, and then, besides, there was the wife and the baby—born during my absence—back "East", and I simply couldn't stay, so I quit and went to Stanbury, Missouri, where I was joined by my family.

Here I secured a run on the old North Missouri railroad, which a few months afterwards was purchased by the original Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific. This change placed me back in the service of the Wabash, and I remained here for six years. I lived at Stanbury, and my run extended to Brunswick.

A MAN ON THE TRACK.

One dark, foggy, clammy sort of a night, while coming up the road and as we approached the crossing of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, I saw through the mist a dark object lying on the track ahead and between the rails. My first impulse, as I peered through the night, was that my eyes had deceived me, but some power within me cried out in alarm and impelled me to shut off and reverse my engine and bring the train to a stop, just as we reached the object, by this time plainly discernable on the track under the nose of the pilot.

Jumping off the engine and running to the object, I found it to be a man. His head and shoulders were well under the pilot (which was unusually high), and it was with some difficulty that the fireman and I succeeded in getting him out at last by dragging him between the pilot and the front engine truck, it being impossible to pull him out as he had gone in. We found that the man was uninjured, but was so drunk that he did not know anything.

The train crew had by now arrived on the scene, and we lifted the man and his jag into the caboose and took him to Gallatin, where the agent recognized him as foreman of the rock crusher near Jamison station.

I saw the man next day on my down trip, and he told me that if he lived to be as old as Methuselah he would never touch another drop of liquor. I have often wondered if he kept his pledge.

DISOBEY RULES AND SAVES TRAIN.

Many times it is a serious matter for a railroad man to violate rules and orders, but like all rules there are occasional exceptions. Here is one of them.

It is a rule that an inferior train must keep off the time of a superior train at least ten minutes.

One night, starting out of Moberly for Stanbury, one hundred forty-six miles, I was pulling what was known as the Manifest freight, and we had the right of track except as against the Cannon-Ball, which we were due to meet at Pattonsburg. We arrived at Jamison, ten miles distant from Pattonsburg. My watch indicated that I had twenty minutes in which to reach Pattonsburg, and I went through Jamison with throttle wide open and the old girl spinning along for dear life, with plenty of time to clear the Cannon-Ball at Pattonsburg. As we left Jamison we struck a gentle down grade and our speed gently increased until we were flying along like a meteor with a trail of smoke and sparks marking our path across the country.

We had just got under good headway when Conductor Chas. Hamlet came running over the train against the wind, smoke and cinders. Reaching the engine he stumbled over the tender and dived into the cab exclaiming, "For God's sake, man, don't you know that you are on the Canno-Ball's time?"

I looked at my watch, which showed seven minutes to the meeting time, which was more than ample to get into the clear. But the conductor comparing his time with mine, found that the two watches did not agree and if his time was right we were already on the Cannon-Ball's time with no chance to clear before reaching Pattonsburg. It was no time for argument, and I grasped the reverse lever and gave it a couple of notches to increse our speed. Already going at a fast clip the added energy sent a stream of fire out of the old Rogers smokestack that gave the swiftly moving machine the appearance of a charging, fiery monster threatening to set the world on fire. Vomiting a trail of fire that old engine started on as wild a run as ever train and engine took. Only short distances of track could be seen ahead, but I felt there was but the one chance to take, and I took it. I had taken my switchkey out of my pocket, blew into its hole to remove possible obstructions, and then handing the key to the fireman told him to crawl out on the running board to the pilot and be prepared to head us in on the siding when we stopped at the switch. I then told the head brakeman, who was riding on the engine. to get out on his train and not to set any brakes until I whistled for them, but when I did whistle that we would make a York and Era stop—that is the head brakeman would start from the front end and work back as fast as possible until he met the rear brakeman working toward the front.

By this time the fireman was on the pilot ready for his part, and then we rounded a curve at the whistling post and thundered toward the switch. Every man's heart of that crew was in his throat as we swung around that curve, and as we bore down on the switch the faint gleam of the headlight, discovered that the switch was already set for the siding, and we glided into safety while the fireman set the switch for the mainline after we cleared, and just then the Canno-Ball bore down upon us, and dashed safely into the night.

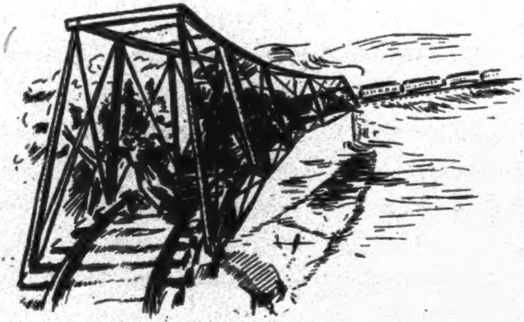
No one ever knew how that switch came to be open.

In this run we had violated the rules, but if we had not the Cannon-Ball would have dashed into that open switch at a forty-mile clip and a disastrous wreck would have resulted.

Of course, nothing of this ever reached the general office or it would have meant ill to us, and, while there could have been no excuse for us if disaster had resulted, it would seem that the hand of fate had taken this means to save many lives and much property, and to prove that there are exceptions to all rules.

HITS WOMEN ON A BRIDGE.

We have now got to a period somewhere about 1884, and I am running passenger. One very warm, summer afternoon we had left Pattonsburg with a train of six coaches, we were ripping along westbound with the bridles off and making something like sixty miles to the hour. Coming to the great truss bridge spanning Grand River we hit it with undiminished speed as was usual. Now, this bridge structure was about three hundred feet in length and built with such a degree of curvature that in approaching it from either side one could not see the track ahead for more than half the length of the bridge.



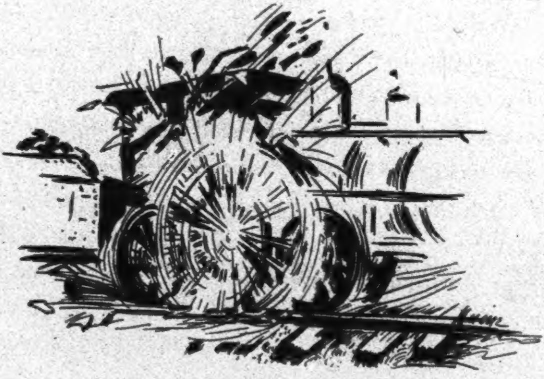
No Power On Earth Could Save Them

This afternoon as we got well onto the structure and traveling, as I said, at sixty miles an hour, one hundred feet ahead sat two women. They were reclining on the ties between the rails and were evidently resting in the shade of a giant white oak tree that shaded this portion of the bridge and which grew on the river bank; about the women were numerous bundles, as if they had just come from market. These details I instictively absorbed as my train bore down upon them.

Well, dear reader, of all the dangers that are forever lurking in the path of locomotive men, a human being on the track whom you are bound to strike is the most horrifying. I was right upon these women before I saw them, and seeing, I realized there was no power on earth that could save them, yet with superhuman effort I tried to stop that train, applying the emergency, throwing the reverse lever over and pulling the throttle wide open, and giving her the sand, which was all weak man could do in the few stingy seconds of time; but, in spite of all, the iron monster, with cruel impact, struck the women, and it was all over. They proved to be mother and daughter, the younger being about forty-five. The elderly lady was killed instantly and her torn body was thrown to the river bank; the younger woman had both legs severed and lived four or five hours after the accident. Her dying words were, "Don't blame the engineer."

SIDE ROD ON RAMPAGE.

Did you ever play hide and seek with a broken side rod on a locomotive? It's a great game for excitement; you can get more thrills from a broken side rod on a fast moving engine than one could find stored away in a freshly charged electric battery.



Side Rods On a Rampage

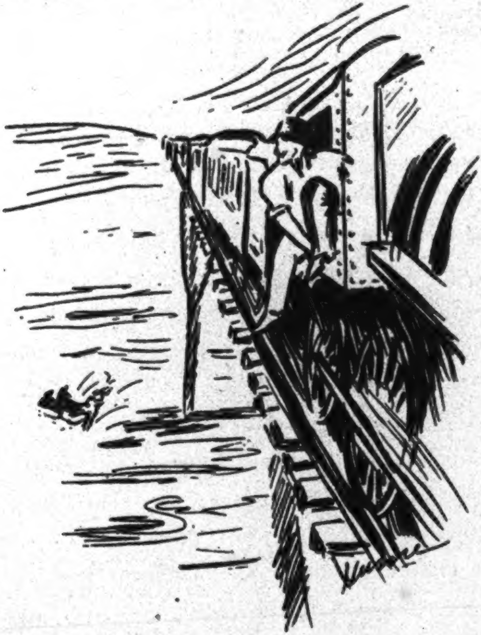
One night three miles east of Pattonsburg I had my introduction to this game. I was pulling a freight train with a Rogers' Mogul—a three-driver connected, with pony trucks. We were on a nice level piece of track, and, as usual under favorable conditions, were hitting the grit and only touching the high points in the track. Suddenly there was a crash and my side of the cab disappeared, as I was thrown to the deck of the engine in front of the fire box, then biff, biff, biff with every revolution of the drivers, that "wild" driving rod was poking its giant fist about looking for trouble.

The trouble was started by the main pin connecting the driving rod, which had broken, and the rod had been jerked out of the rear strap, so that with each revolution of the drivers, the heavy piece of steel was swirled through its circle and hammering things to pieces, and promising to put the train in the ditch. The engine was equipped with what was known in those days as a monkey-tailed rachet pop valve, and this was broken off in the course of the melee, and the steam rushed through the orifice completely enveloping the cab in its scalding clouds, and making it impossible for me to reach the whistle and call for brakes—we were not equipped with air. The train ran a mile or more under this condition of affairs before it finally lost its momentum and came to a standstill.

None of us suffered any damage of moment, only my overalls and jumper were slit down the front from the neck to below the waist line, and my watch chain was pulled loose and was afterwards found by a farmer on the right of way and returned to me.

A LITTLE GIRL ON A BRIDGE.

On the Cannon-Ball one morning, running between Stanbury and Council Bluffs, we were just approaching Malvourn, Iowa, and bridge, probably five hundred feet in length, spanning a small stream. Just as we came to the structure, I saw a little darling of a girl probably nine years of age, midway of the structure, and occupying the center of the track. You may be sure that I dynamited things in my efforts to stop, but it was too late. In the meantime, the little dear saw our approach, and with wonderful presence of mind for one so young, threw herself, face down, upon the ties and near the rail on my side. We were hauling six coaches, and I had the train almost stopped when



Out of the Cab Into the Water

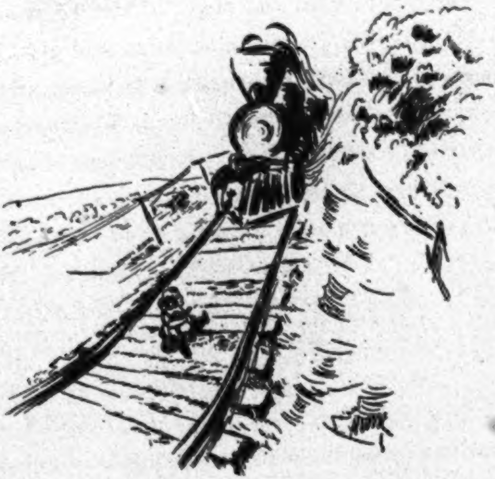
the child, over whom the engine and entire train had passed, raised herself only to be struck by the rear steps of the last coach, and was precipitated to the river below, a distance of probably thirty-five feet. I was leaning far out the cab window, and saw the child fall. On the instant I was out of the cab and into the water, and soon had her in a bear-like clasp to my bosom with not a hair of her head hurt. The water was only about four feet in depth, and I was soon climbing up the bank and back to the track at the rear of the train, with my precious burden.

The child lived but a few paces up the track from the bridge, and her mother and grandfather had been watching her as she toddled off across the bridge to school a few moments before. After the little one had gained the bridge the watchers had heard the roar of the approaching train, but there was not a moment's time in which to act before the train rushed upon and over the little one. The whole incident was not more than a minute of time in its enactment, but it must have seemed hours to the agonized mother as she rushed up to the scene as I clamored up to the embankment with her darling in my arms.

For many a month after that, that sweet little child was at the depot when I was due in, and she always had a big chunk of cake or some dainty for the big engineer, who invariably, on these occasions, hopped out of his cab and held the little one to his dirty bosom, while he kissed her innocent, smiling lips.

PICKS A CHILD FROM THE TRACK.

The foregoing story reminds me that way back in my fireman days, when I had a passenger run between Clayton and Keokuk, a distance of forty-two miles.



I Got a Toe Hold

One day between Bowen and Chatton stations, the train was running at full speed, when a little two year old tot playing on the track in front of her country home, loomed up in the distance. At the moment the engineer did not realize that the object ahead was a child—it being sometimes difficult to distinguish from a fast moving engine as between a child and a dog, for instance, on the track at some distance ahead. When he at last realized what was ahead of him, he at once whistled for brakes, reversed his engine, and gave her the sand, all the while realizing that it would be impossible to stop before the little one had been struck. In all my life I have never seen such a look of agony as that engineer displayed as he turned and shouted to me that there was a baby on the track. On the instant I was out of the cab and onto the running board making for the pilot, reaching which I got a toe hold between the slats of the pilot and grabbed the shackling bar (old fashioned coupler on pilot of locomotive) with my left hand, I reached out and as the engine bore down upon it, I grabbed the little one by the shoulder and raised it off its feet and up to my body. The train, in the meantime, had been slowed down to a speed of perhaps ten miles an hour and as I brought the child up to my body, I felt my toe hold slipping, and in order to save the child and myself from falling beneath the engine, I gave my body a sudden lurch to one side, and with the baby in my arms, I rolled down the embankment, clear of the engine to safety.

Neither of us were hurt aside from a few bramble scratches received from our descent down the embankment.

Here again the mother was a witness to the incident, and, as she realized the danger of her darling, she rushed bareheaded, with her arms waiving and her voice shouting the anguish of her distracted soul, to the scene. As the train came to a standstill, crew and passengers came pell-mell from the train as baby and I crawled up the embankment, and many a tear of joy was shed as the hysterical mother clasped her baby to her arms, while "Blaze Face", the fire boy, was made out a hero much to his discomfort.

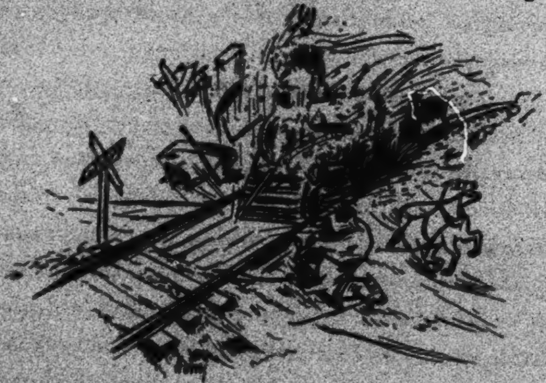
EVERYBODY CRIED BUT THE BABY.

We must now get back to the time I was running on the Wabash division of the C. B. & Q. It was one afternoon going west toward Burlington, Iowa, and I was just bringing the freight train I was pulling to a stop, with the aid of the train crew and handbrakes, for the crossing of the C. B. & Q. tracks. We were on quite a steep incline, but nearly had the train stopped, running at the moment at about six miles an hour, when, without a moment's warning, a little tot, maybe three years old, playing at the side of the track, on some impulse, ran directly in front of the engine and was shoved, rather than knocked, down, and disappeared beneath the pilot. Almost instantly I had the train stopped, and with my heart in my throat I jumped from the engine and sought the baby, whom I expected to find crushed and mangled. Peering beneath the tender there I saw the little chap and reaching in I hastily pulled him out.

Imagine, if you can, my joy at finding the little fellow uninjured. I hugged him to my bosom in an ecstasy of joy and tears rolled down my cheeks, while my fireman danced about me in his joy, trying to get the child from me and into his own arms, and he was crying like a baby also. Then the mother appeared, and grabbing the baby from me, added her share to the flood of tears, while all this time the baby was laughing and cooing, and clapping his little hands as if he enjoyed the whole thing.

FEATHER MY NEST.

Speaking of road crossings, I remember one night I was called for a special. The president of the road and a big bunch of high tyees were to go over the division in a special. I was to have my engine cleaned up beautifully and run light to the point where I was to get my train. The fire boy and I put in a good part of the night shining the old girl up and getting her ready for her distinguished work. The next morning bright and early we were started for Terre Haute, with the early morning sun playing with our burnished brass and bright steel parts. To make a long story short, we hit a wagon on a road crossing 20 miles out; we fortunately didn't kill anybody but we certainly demolished that wagon; but that was not the worst of it. It was a junk wagon and the driver had gathered up a full load of feathers and eggs. When that locomotive tore into that load there was created the worst mixture of fresh ranch eggs and goose feathers one ever saw, and that spank engine



A Mixture of Ranch Eggs and Goose Feathers

came out the most bedraggled and besmeared looking sight that one most ever saw. She limped off the scene looking like a cross between a whipped rooster and a sad eyed goose. There were the maddest men in that cab that ever rode a locomotive, and the facts are that I pulled goose feathers and wiped fried eggs off that engine for three months afterwards.

NEARLY GET ME.

One day while out with a freight crew, we pulled into Shannandoah, Iowa; I had been troubled with a hot engine truck all morning, and while the boys were in at breakfast at Shannandoah, I determined to fix the box, and crawled in under the engine with this purpose in view. While engaged beneath the engine, the rest of the crew returned from breakfast, and having some switching to do, and concluding that I was still in the dining room, a big brakeman volunteered to run the engine and clean up the work. I was unconscious of what was going on, when suddenly I realized that the engine was about to move. Scared pretty nearly to death, I began to holler, but the noise of the cylinder cocks, with their hissing steam, drowned my cries. I grabbed a hold of the engine frame and clung on for dear life, still hollering like a fog horn, while the engine started down the yard. The conductor was standing on a sidetrack taking car numbers and he heard my cries and signaled the engine down. When I crawled out from under I was swearing like a pirate, and was madder than a wet hen. The brakeman, when he realized what had happened, of course, got scared as well as apologetic, and we soon kissed and made up. But I am here to say it was a very close call for yours truly, and this great work came within an ace of being denied to the world, because its author might have been ground up in Hamburger instead of living to become an "old-timer" with broken side rods.

WE MISS THE TRUCKS.

Coming west on the Wabash into Decatur, Ill., with a long string of box cars on a local freight, we stopped at the east end of the yards to kick some empties onto the siding. Conductor Walter Morgan came running up to pull the pin on a car, and as he was about to step between the cars to do this I saw him stop and begin to peer beneath a car as if he had discovered something wrong. A moment later he came up to the engine and informed us that there was a car back there in the train without its forward trucks. Investigation proved that the trucks in question had left the car and the track just after we had crossed Sangaman river bridge, three and half miles east of Decatur, leaving the front end of the car suspended by the link and pin coupling, like a dog walking on its hind legs while its front are supported by the hands of its master. The trucks on leaving the rails, shot down an embankment and into the brush where they were afterwards found by the section crew. All of which goes to prove that the little cars of forty years ago could do stunts impossible to the big fellows of today.

GOOD-BYE TO THE WABASH.

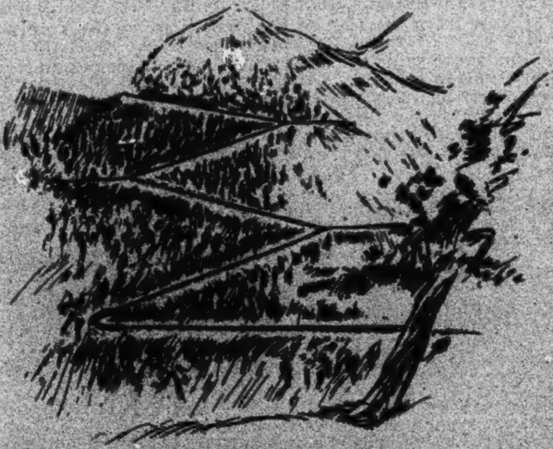
In the fall of 1886 I bid good-bye to the old Wabash, where I had worked first and last, some fifteen years—and taking my good wife and three babies—all thoroughbreds and not a freckle on them, we started for the Golden West, to fair Washington state; the land of genial and bountiful nature, where snowcapped peaks looked down in solemn silence upon verdure clad mountains and peaceful valleys, pregnant with bountiful harvests of golden grain and lucious fruits; a land where the elements of nature know not wrath; a land where health, happiness and prosperity are meted out to man with an unstinted hand; a land lapped by the waves of the Pacific Ocean and caressed by the genial Japan Current; a land for sturdy men, beautiful women, and happy, laughing children.

A SPECTACULAR RUNAWAY.

In due time we arrived at Ellensburg, a division on the Northern Pacific railroad in eastern Washington, and near the foot of the Cascade Mountain range. The Northern Pacific was just building westward through the then Territory of Washington, and the rails had been laid as far as Easton, at the base of the mountains.

I was assigned to engine 308, a Baldwin Standard, and sent to the front in construction. The road was then being extended from Easton up the slopes of the mountain, and shortly after I started work the construction of the famous switchback was begun, and it was on this work that the most spectacular, and at the same time most extraordinary, runaway occurred in railroad history.

Before describing the incident, I would have the reader understand the nature of the "switchback." This was a railroad built up the mountainside in such a way that the line paralleled itself, only the parallels were each at a higher elevation on the mountainside. These lines of track were called "legs", and at the end of each there was a switch and a stem of track projecting beyond the switch. Thus a train starting at the foot of the switchback with an engine in front and also at the rear, as was the custom, would, when arriving at the first stem, run onto this piece of track until the rear engine cleared, when the switch would be thrown and then with the rear engine in front, the


The Famous Switchback

train would start up the second leg, and so on until the summit of the mountain was reached, when the descent would be made in the same manner.

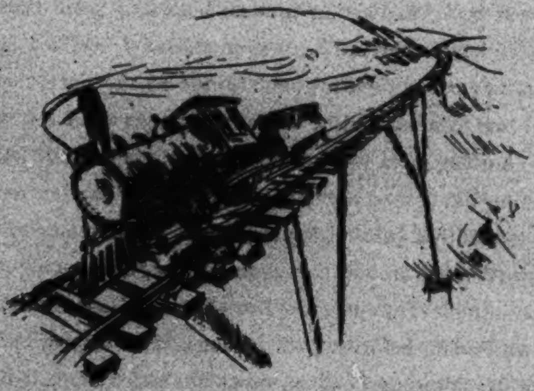
Now from the foot of the first "leg" to the summit of the mountain the elevation was fifteen hundred feet, each leg was approximately one mile in length, and the grade approximated three hundred and thirty feet to the mile. These figures are given from memory, but are approximately correct.

Now to get back to our story. One day along in January, when only the first leg of the switchback had been completed, I was assigned to engine 457, a ten-wheel Baldwin, and with a car heavily loaded with bridge timbers, started out of Easton for Martin, where we were supposed to turn the car over to another crew who were equipped with a Decapod type of engine built especially for mountain climbing. There were two of these massive (at this time) engines at work at the front and were at the time the largest locomotives in the world. Engines such as the 457, which I was running, were not supposed to go beyond Martin, as they were utterly unfit for the steep grades of the "back". On this morning when we arrived at Martin, Superintendent of Construction Reardon informed me that the two Decapod engines were out of commission, and that the car of material that I had brought up this far was urgently needed at the front, and he asked me if I could not take it on up. I informed him that my engine was not equal to the climb as she hadn't the power in her cylinders to negotiate such a grade, and I indicated that I would not attempt it. He expressed his belief that the engine was equal to the task and earnestly requested me to try it,

The Decapod Engine

and when I demurred he insisted. At last I told him that if he would get up and ride with me I would go. I thought this would settled it, but to my surprise he volunteered to go, so we started.

There were several feet of snow on the ground and the rail was covered with several inches. We headed up the track until we came to the stem starting up the first leg and where we switched onto the leg. While we were making this switch my friend Reardon, without my knowledge, decamped. We now started backing up the "back" and pushing the car. My throttle was wide open and the lever was in the corner, and I was giving the engine every advantage possible. Up we crawled at a snail's pace, the engine working every ounce of power she possessed, but clinging to the rail beautifully, until we came to a point very near the end of the track, when we struck some freshly laid rails, and she no sooner struck these—possibly covered with grease—than she went off her feet like a fat lady encountering a banana peeling on the sidewalk. I yanked the sand lever open, but I soon found that the sand pipes had been plugged with snow in backing up the leg. God! How I sweat trying to coax that engine to her feet in the few seconds that were given me before I felt her slipping, slipping hopelessly under me, like a horse trying to go up a steep, icy embankment, and the easy motion of her drivers scarcely fanning the fire. Then all forward motion ceased, and then a sickening, horrible sensation of falling as the engine, in spite of her power and her driving brakes, began to glide down the hill. As her momentum increased I realized she was beyond all control, and turned to the fireman to tell him to jump, but he had already gone and I followed, landing in a snowdrift right side up, while that engine like a mad monster charged down the leg with a speed that was sickening, even to look at. For quite a mile, around curves and through cuts charged the iron devil gone crazy, or, if you please, a timid fawn fleeing before a pack of dogs. But on, on, rocking, lurching, and on, on, down the steep slope, gaining velocity with every turn of the drivers. A mile down, the leg made a considerable curve through a deep cut and out of the cut there was a trestle some four hundred feet in length, and 90 feet in height, and at work here were a number of bridge men. Here Jerry Simpson, better known as "One Eyed Jerry," was sitting astraddle of a tie between the rails well toward the middle of the bridge, and he was hauling up a timber from below with a rope working hand over hand. Another bridgeman was at work a few feet beyond Jerry, but to one side of the narrow structure. Without warning, there suddenly dashed out of the cut the runaway engine, and bore down



The Engine Careened

upon the men, who hadn't a second's time in which to act. Jerry, after one glance, threw his body forward and across the rail so as to have it over quick, if he had a thought at all. The monster dashed upon the prostrate man, but just before striking him the engine careened over and the wheels on Jerry's side raised from the track and cleared Jerry's body, and then the engine dashed through the bridge, and down into the valley below carrying the poor fellow who had been near Jerry with it.

The car behind the engine had broken loose and jumped into the ravine just as the engine came onto the bridge.

The engine fell seventy-five feet to the gully below and landed in the deep snow, while the poor man she carried with her was but a mass of torn flesh and broken bones when picked up.

Incidentally it might be noted that in a few days a track was built down to the crippled engine, and a wrecking outfit pulled her back to the main line and she was taken to the shops and rebuilt, after which she was again assigned to me, and again did I come near meeting my Waterloo with her.

A LAP ORDER.

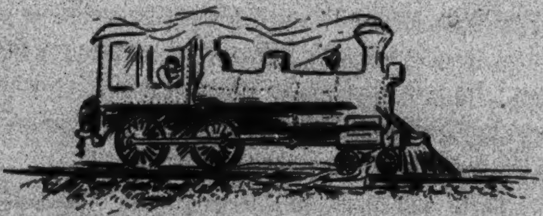
The work of construction by the last of March following the runaway was completed beyond what was known as Dingle's tunnel, and it was within this hollow cavern that I again came very near finishing my railroad career, and incidentally, my earthly existence.

It was in the early morning of the thirtieth day of March before the curtain of night had been lifted. I was at Martin, bound east with orders to meet engine 222 at Easton. Engineer Billy Atkinson of engine 222 had orders to meet me at Martin—a lap order pure and simple.

Leaving Martin I was backing down the steep mountain at an eighteen-mile-an-hour clip, with the thought of my meet uppermost in my mind. Unknow to me, Billy Atkinson was coming up the mountain head-on at a twenty-mile clip expecting to meet me at Martin. At 4:48 A. M. Billy and I met in Dingle's tunnel. Besides the darkness of the night and the natural darkness of the tunnel, the heavy smoke hovering in the underground passage intensified the darkness and made it a wall of blackness. The opposing engines could not have been more than ten feet apart when I suddenly espied the bleary-eyed headlight of the 222 learing at me through the night. There was only a fraction of a second—a very little fraction—but it is wonderful what one can do in such a space of time under proper impulse. Of course, one instinctively applies the air under such conditions. I did so, then, at the same time, turned to warn my fireman. He was standing in the gangway. I reached over, grabbed him by the collar and yanked him over to the boiler-head—then the two engines met.

There was that characteristic crash, that awful shudder of concussion between two "irrepressible" bodies, the grinding and moaning of sorely wounded locomotives; then my fireman and myself realized that we were pressed against a hot boiler-head by the coal out of our tender, while the tender itself was "jabbed" into the cab for a couple of feet. Fortunately neither of us were injured and by a little squirming we crawled out of the cab. Armed with a torch which I had lighted before leaving the cab, we made our way through the dense smoke and hissing steam to the other engine, where we happily found Atkinson and his fireman no worse off than ourselves.

It was a mile and a half back to Martin, and after a consultation we disconnected the tender, which was badly smashed, and from which the water was pouring in a flood from a rent the size of a man's body. Luckily my boiler was unusually well filled with water, so loading the firebox with coal and taking a few bushels of fuel on our deck, we pulled the engine out of the wreckage and started back up the hill to Martin without the tender.



Disconnected the Tender--The Artist Insists That We Took Off Piston Guides and a Pair of Drivers, but We Didn't

There was a considerable bunch of railroad men about the yards and station as we whistled in, and as they saw the "bobbed-tailed" engine coming up the hill there was some speculation among them, you can well imagine. Stopping in front of the office, I dismounted from the engine and had some difficulty in making my way into the dispatcher through the curious throng. Gaining the office, I sent the following message to the officials at Tacoma and Ellensburg:

"Engines 457 and 222 collided in Dingle's tunnel at 4:48 A. M. Nobody hurt. Four hours will clear track."

While this incident is commonplace enough in the life of the railroad man, yet mention of Dingle's tunnel and the memory of that bleary-eyed locomotive headlight learing at me through the darkness will always have a place upon the walls of my memory.

COMPLETION OF STAMPEDE TUNNEL.

After the incident just recited the 457 was again sent to the shops to have her "fixings" restored to the normal, and when she came out she again fell to me, and for several months we continued good friends without getting into any more mix-ups. During this time the great Stampede tunnel was completed, and the temporary "switchback" having served its purpose, was abandoned.

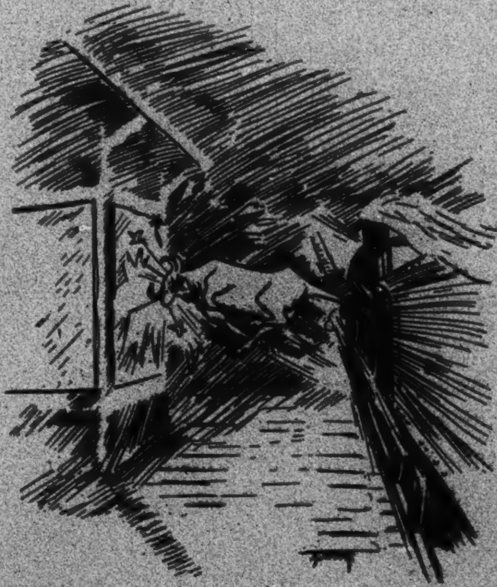
The Stampede tunnel is a great hole bored through the mountain; the tunnel is two miles in length and is brilliantly lighted with electric lights throughout its length, and when one is well toward the center of the hole there is a quarter of a mile of mountain atop of him.

STATION TURNED INTO A BUTCHER SHOP.

After the completion and opening of the tunnel, I was assigned to a freight run on the east end out of Ellensburg to Pasco. A feature of the business was what was called a silk and tea train running between Tacoma and the eastern terminal of the road. These trains would be loaded with tea or silk from the Oriental steamers, and rushed across the continent with a speed equalling or exceeding passenger trains.

On this particular occasion I was pulling one of these trains and the only limits on our speed was the capacity of the engine to go. Between Yakima and to beyond Toppenish, a distance of more than thirty miles, there is a beautiful piece of race track, where a train will roll thirty miles an hour without the use of steam. Going out of Yakima on one of these trains it was my custom to take the bridle off the old girl and hitting her across the rump let her go as fast as the easy grade, a wide open throttle, and a short stroke would send her. Oh, man, how we used to fly along that beautiful track! I can feel the exhiliration of it now, and in my mind's eye can picture the little "mare" skimming along with her head up and tail full of wind, as she dashed along cutting the air like a cannon ball. It was a great run, with no stops excepting for water and coal, and I always loved the tea trains.

Well, one night I took one of these trains at Ellensburg, and started on my run. In due time we came to the race course. The moonlight was shining on the rails, giving them the appearance of silver threads reaching out across the barren plain. The "old girl," as we pulled out of Yakima, was prancing and champing at the bit, everything behind was snug, the track was clear, and all we had to do was to go—and we surely went. Telegraph poles looked like they were only planted two feet apart, and the country appeared from the cab window like a rapidly moving panorama, while a full moon beamed genially down upon us, shedding a flood of light in a sort of halo over the scene. Approaching the little stations there was a scream from the whistle, the clatter of a switch crossing, the blear of a depot, and on into the glimmer of the night. Thus we went until we whistled for Toppenish where at that time there was but a depot and a warehouse—the warehouse being on the same side of the track as the depot and probably one hundred feet west of it. We had scarcely whistled before we were flying through the yards with undiminished speed, when just as we came upon the warehouse a cow brute started out from the far end of the structure and was about to leisurely cross the track across our bow. Her intention was never carried out, for our pilot struck her amidships with a vicious blow and picked her up hurled her through the bay window of the depot, across the telegraph table and onto the office floor amidst a wreckage of office furniture, while we sped merrily on our way, wondering what



Found a Hamburgered Cow In His Office

had become of the cow that for a brief second had appeared athwart our front end.

I have often wondered what must have been the feeling of the agent at Toppenish when he appeared next morning and found his front end caved in and a Hamburgered cow on his office floor.

A RATHER CURIOUS RUNAWAY.

While on this bit of track, it might not be amiss to relate a rather curious incident of a runaway down the line that occurred during my time on the road, although I was not concerned in it. The incident tends to illustrate one of the numerous things that are always possible in railroad life.

A westbound freight train was pulling into Yakima, and it was intended to stop at the stock yards before the depot stop and pick up a couple of cars loaded with cattle. The conductor had sent the rear brakeman forward with instructions to make the pick-up as quickly as possible, informing the brakeman that he, the conductor, would attend to setting the caboose brakes and hold the train on the grade while the switching was being done. It seems that the brakeman had hardly left the caboose on his mission before the conductor had fallen asleep on the seat cushions of his car. Arriving at the stock yards the engine was uncoupled from the train and headed in the siding to pick up the two cattle cars. She got the cars, backed out, and leaving the cars on the main line she headed again into the siding so that the two cars in charge of a brakeman could roll past the switch and back to the train. All this was carried out in the usual way, but after the cars had rolled down the track, the brakeman in charge became nonplused in not finding the train. It soon was understood that the train must have got away from the conductor, and was then, no doubt, rolling to its destruction down the thirty-mile-an-hour grade. Hooking the engine onto the two cars the crew started in pursuit of the runaway. Now, this train had been carrying signals indicating that a second section was following it, and as the engine and crew started in pursuit of the runaway through the inky black night, it can well be imagined that they had some anticipation of a mix-up down the line. Owing to the blackness of the night they were compelled to proceed very cautiously, but soon the night wore away and the horizon became lighted with the first rays of the morning sun, and they speeded up as the light increased. Thirty miles down the line the incline ended and there followed a bit of upgrade.

At the foot of this grade the lost train was found and again picked up. Luckily the second section had been delayed and was two hours late; otherwise a disastrous "rear" end collision would have resulted with the peculiar circumstance of the "rear" end being in reverse motion.

A SCENIC RUN.

In the course of a short time I inherited a passenger run between Ellensburg and Tacoma. This was a splendid run, where the senses were ever charmed as well as thrilled. Out of the peaceful Kittitas valley, with its fragrant orchards and green meadows where the gentle kine grazed among the daisies. Climbing up the picturesque sides of the old Cascade Mountain woodland; up, up toward the very clouds to a land where snow and ice are in evidence ten months of the year, a land of wooded valleys and precipitous sides, then darting in the cavernous mouth of the great tunnel and on down the western slope, still shrouded in evergreen forests, with crystal mountain streams bounding and racing along apace with the swift flying North Coast Limited; down, down, down, winding, squirming and dashing headlong like a monstrous living thing goes the palatial train, into the soft, balmy air of the "west" side where the gentle breath of the seductive Japan Current impregnates nature with continuous spring; passing a clearing in the forest where busy saw mill towns teem with an active life, over meadow land and passing peaceful dairy farms, and then to the serene shores of Puget Sound. A wondrous run, a run that causes the red corpuscles to dominate one's blood; a run where nature seems ever to be romancing with one and filling one's mind with the intoxicating charm of it all. Never twice would the scene appear just the same; there was always variety and a new inspiration in the beautious rays of the rising sun piercing the mountain fastness, and intoxication in the glorious sunset. There was a heavenly music in the murmur of the grand old trees and gleeful song in the rushing waters, to all of which the thunder of the flying train added its part in the great symphony. I doubt if there is in the world another one hundred and twenty-six miles of track that affords such a panorama of noble scenery, such a wondrous variation yet subtility of climate, and yet, withal, where danger ever lurks to add its charm for him who rides the rail day after day. My memory clings to all of this, and, as the separating years hasten by, I love to dwell in fond recollection of this period of my life.

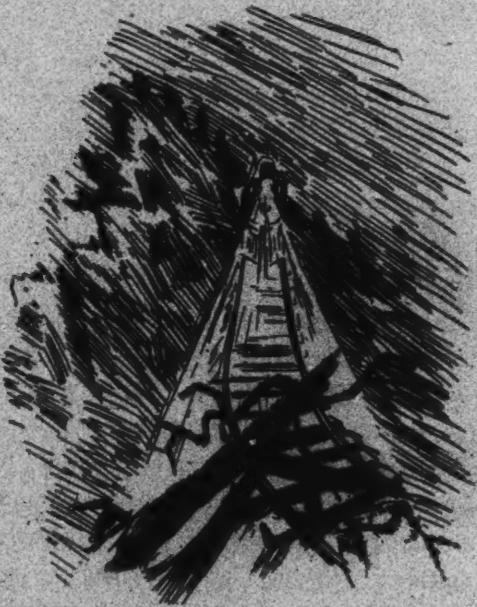
RUN INTO A TREE.

A few months after I had taken this run across the mountains to Tacoma, I got my train in due course one night at Ellensburg about nine o'clock. We had ten coaches and the train was turned over to us twenty-five minutes late, and as we pulled out I pounded her for all she was worth in an effort to win back the lost time. We made a nice run up the mountain, dashed through the tunnel, and with taut nerves, started down the slope with a fine track of heavy rails beneath us. Down, down, we glided, the air responding beautifully to the slightest movement of the lever —we were making a beautiful run and slowly but surely winning back the lost minutes. My, oh my, how we skimmed along the banks of that fine stretch of track paralleling Green River, then heading across country to South Prairie. Arriving here we had won back fifteen minutes of the time, but were still ten minutes late. As we pulled out of the station I turned to my good fireboy, Sam Hood, and said, "Boy, we are still ten minutes to the bad. Can we hit the avenue depot at Tacoma on time?"

The begrimed tallowpot turned half around, and facing me replied, "You give her the notches and I will give her the coal, and we will win straight up."

With a gentle down grade and with the throttle nicely placed and the lever hooked up short, we started on our last lap of the run with twenty-five miles on which to win ten minutes. The ordinary schedule was no slothful affair and to win time here was no child's play—it required running, and I reckon we run some that night. On this grade we were going seventy miles an hour; everything was snug and the sailing was good. We were traveling through a heavy bit of forest and from our speedy viewpoint the trees appeared as close together as teeth in a fine-tooth comb.

We were now on a stretch where the roadbed rested on a considerable fill and the track curved considerably and from my side the track was not often in



I Applied the Emergency, but Too Late!

view. Suddenly out of the blackness of the night the headlight brought a giant tree, which, owing to decay, had lost its root hold and had fallen against the side of the fill, and its jagged end sticking above and across the track about on a line with the hand rail of the engine. The projecting stump was about two feet in diameter and this in the path of a passenger train traveling at a speed of seventy miles an hour. It has taken several minutes to write this, but from the moment that I first saw the obstruction until we tore into it was only a matter of a second's time, yet I seemed to live ten years in that second's space. Of course, I applied the emergency, pulled her over and all that, but those things are really a joke when you are right on top of an obstruction in front of a fast running train. You are going to hit, and hit hard; what the results are going to be no man can know until after the shock, then those who are left will have some idea of it. Well, as said, we hit that stump, and it was no love tap either; I waited for the shock, but there was only the slightest tremble and our momentum carried us on, while the brakes were working overtime bringing us to a stop, and the drivers spitting fire from the friction of the brake shoes—then open with the hope that the terrific shock and strain would break the train in two, in which event the engine and what cars happened to cling to it would dash into the trap and then on to destruction down the hill, while the rear portion would be brought to a sudden stop. It will be understood that running on a down grade each car in the train will crowd forward on the car ahead, the slack being taken up by each car. The act of applying the emergency brakes under these conditions has the effect of pulling the slack out and then the sudden opening of the throttle and the resulting sudden forward bound of the heavy engine creates a strain that is bound to get one or more of the weaker couplings of a train.

In the instance in hand the train broke into three sections, two rear Pullman cars broke off and stopped almost instantly, the next four cars left a gap of about forty feet between them and the Pullmans, the forward car just reaching the gap, and the front trucks went off the track, while the engine, mail, express, baggage and an unoccupied tourist car dashed into the danger zone and plunged down the hillside midway to the track below. The twinkling stars looked down upon this scene of wreckage and disaster, and witnessed a miracle, for of the men representing the engine crew, mail clerk, baggageman, express messenger, and a brakeman, not one was seriously injured, although cars and engine were an indescribable mass of splintered wood, and bent and twisted iron, and it was but a few moments ere the remnants of the cars were sending tongues of flame to the firmament above and

The Ashes of the Burned Train

lending a lurid light to a dismal picture of disaster there in those lonely, ghostly woods. You who have never witnessed such a scene probably cannot understand the horror of uncertainty that filled the souls of those who were involved in this drama of the rail, but let me assure you, dear reader, there were thrills enough here in the space of a few seconds to last one for many a day.

As the engine bit the ties after I had opened her up and had done all there was to be done I stuck my feet out of the cab window to jump—I had shouted to the fireman when I first saw the open rail, and he made his getaway some time during the excitement, but I don't know when—just then she tore over the bank and down the hill, landing on her left side. I have no recollection of anything after I first stuck my feet out, until I found myself in a coach up on the track, but they told me that they had picked me up about twenty feet down the hill from the engine and had carried me up and planked me down in one of the Pullmans where a number of people were hovering about anxiously watching a doctor trying to revive me. Among those who appeared to take a great interest in my case was a lady who was assisting the doctor. When she saw my eyes open and the light of returning reason in them she smiled down on me and then turned to the crowd and insisted that some one get me some whiskey, exclaiming that I was freezing and needed stimulation—and she was right. A number of the men made a run for their grips and in a few minutes there were a dozen big bottles pointing at me like cannons on a battleship. The lady soon had a good jolt of liquor stored away in my boiler and I was coming on fine. Just about this time the door at the far end of the car opened and a big burly devil came into the car ranting and complaining about the loss of his baggage which had been consumed by fire along with the baggage car and the rest of its contents. The fellow was cursing the railroad and its employees for not saving his baggage, and as he reached a point near the lady who was bending over me, she straightened up and raising her arm she gave the brute a slap in the face that actually sent him staggering over a we stopped. I whistled back a flagman and then jumped from the cab with torch in hand to see what had been done to us. I found the nigger head of the boiler smashed in, and there was a hole large enough for a man to crawl through. The left main driving rod was kinked, evidently having been hit and jammed by a piece of the broken tree. About this time dapper little Paul Thompson, the captain, came running up and inquired, "What's the matter, Harve?"

I explained that it was my belief that I had a bent driving rod, and asked him to sight along the rod as I held the light for him. He assured me that the rod was bent. I then asked him to step to the front end, where I held the light up so that he might view the engine's smashed countenance. Puzzled, he asked what we had hit, and I then recited what had taken place. He allowed that the gods had been kind to us, and I agreed with him. I told the captain that I believed that we had left a kinked rail back where we had struck the stump and advised that he keep a flagman out to protect following trains while we would go on. After testing her, I found that it would not be necessary to disconnect the bent main rod, as it was still long enough to perform its mission. Arriving at Orting we reported the incident and the fact of the bad rail, and then pulled out for Tacoma. We fortunately had a water grade and letting her drift along with her boiler full of water getting her hot for the grade leading up to Avenue depot at Tacoma, for be it understood that with our front end stove in and the vitals exposed to the cool outside air it was no easy matter to keep a head of steam sufficient to drag our train up the grade to the depot. However, we made it all right, and Superintendent Joe McCabe, standing on the platform at the depot, watched us as we came dragging in.

After I had explained to him the particulars of the incident, I noticed Joe's eyes twinkle, and then he said:

"The picture you presented coming up the grade with the fire dancing and playing about your exposed front end looked like a little hell with the lid off."

For three years after the foregoing, I pursued the even tenor of my way, enjoying my run and its picturesque setting; no wrecks, no griefs and always on time—excepting when late—and then came memorable January 2, 1892, and the—

THE REMOVED RAIL.

Between Buckley and South Prairie the railroad track winds its way along a mountain side at a considerable elevation, and then doubles back at a lower level paralleling the upper track. The distance between the tracks being about five hundred feet and looking from the upper level to the track below, a string of box cars would look like a flock of blackbirds lined up on a barbed wire fence. The grade here is about eighty feet to the mile.

On this winter's night along about 8:55, I was skimming along down this upper stretch of track. It was quite cold and snow covered the ground and shrouded the trees of the forest giving them the appearance of ghosts under the light of countless stars glimmering in the heavens. We had been drifting along at speed, when I made a reduction to about twenty-five miles an hour because of a bluff that projected out of the hill and around which the track had been laid. We had but just rounded the point when I released the air and the train was quickly regaining its former momentum of about forty miles an hour, when three coach lengths ahead, I saw to my consternation that a rail had been removed. There is no use trying to describe one's feelings at such a time; it can't be done; suffice it to say that one lives a thousand years for every fraction of a second. The first thought may be panic, but then comes the better impulse, and the thought of the awful calamity threatening the lives of ten car loads of passengers. A mental picture of the train hitting that open rail and then a wild plunge down the precipitous sides of the mountain, cars being splintered into kindling wood, and the quiet winter night in the heart of the forest being pierced and rendered by the cries and groans of the torn and bleeding passengers in the agony of their fright and suffering. No; this is no time for panic for the man in whose care these precious lives are placed. In this instance there appeared but one chance, and I grasping it like a drowning man at a straw. Applying the emergency, and instantly pulling the throttle wide rail and into a seat, and at the same time she exclaimed:

"You ungrateful wretch, you ought to be thankful that you are alive, instead of complaining about the loss of your baggage. If it had not been for this brave man the ashes of your body would probably be mingled with that of your baggage down there on the hillside. Shame on you, shame on you."

That fellow got up and slunk out of the car while the crowd expressed its approval of the spunky lady, who had so effectively shut him up

It was never definitely known who removed the rail, but the supposition was that a gang of train robbers had undertaken the job for the purpose of robbing the wrecked express car, but witnessing the disaster their hearts failed them and they slunk away into the night never to be found.

THE GREAT STRIKE OF '94.

Along in the early fall of '94 came rumors of difficulties between The American Railway Union—an affiliated organization of railroad employees—and the western railroads; then came the strike. Although the

Brootherhood of Locomotive Engineers was not directly involved in the trouble, its members nevertheless became indirectly involved because other branches of train service were out and trains could not be operated with engineers alone. Traffic was then tied up and engineers were laid off. The strike run its weary length and finally ended, and the Northern Pacific posted and sent out notices to the effect that all its old employees were requested to return to work, and that all would be re-employed excepting those guilty of violence during the strike. Now, as has been said, the engineers had not been out on a strike and were only involved incidentally, and, of course, none had been guilty of violence, yet it was soon noticed that engineers who were members of the grievance committee were in every instance refused when they applied for re-instatement. I was a member of the grievance committee and was of the number refused employment, although I was innocent of any wrong-doing in the premises, as a baby. In all there were nine of us at Ellensburg, some nineteen at Tacoma, fifteen at Sprague and proportionate numbers at every division point on the entire system. Realizing that I was to be barred for good, it occurred to me to go elsewhere and seek employment. I bade wife and babies good-bye and started for Seattle, meaning to go east from there over the Great Northern, as traveling was not easy on the Northern Pacific for ex-strikers, and the proscribed engine men. I drifted back to Danville, Illinois, where I secured a job on the Chicago & Eastern Illinois, and everything appeared entirely satisfactory, when one day, after I had worked eighty-seven dollars worth, I received a polite note from the master mechanic informing me that my services were no longer required. I went to the office of Mr. Albert Greggs, the master mechanic, and asked for an explanation. He informed me that he was not at liberty to discuss the matter, but stated that the order of dismissal had come from the general office at Chicago. I had already heard rumors of a black list of the men of the A. R. U. strike, and this was my formal introduction, and I was destined to learn more of the black list spectre ere I got through with it.

From the Chicago & Eastern I went to Frank-fort, Indiana, and secured employment on the Clover Leaf. After a few days the spectre appeared and I was informed that my N. P. reference was unsatisfactory, so I was adrift again. I went down to Louisville, Kentucky, and got a job on the Louisville & Nashville, but again the spectre of unsatisfactory reference, and like the hauted man that I felt myself to be, I moved on; this time to Matoon, Illinois, with like results.

It will be remembered that at the time of the '94 strike the country was in the midst of an awful business depression. At Ellensburg I had acquired a little farm, and, with the aid of my salary, was establishing a home for the wife and babies. Then came the strike, and I lost employment, and before it all ended the loss of my home, and now here I was like a criminal being hounded from place to place and job to job, while my wife and babies in the far west were crying in vain for bread and shelter. During my eight years in the service of the Northern Pacific my record for ability and devotion to duty was never so much as questioned; at the time of the strike, and for three years previous I had been running on the best passenger trains. I had not been a striker—although my sympathies were with the men, but in no instance had I been disloyal in my duty to the company, yet it appeared that the officials were determined to hound me to my death because I had been identified in a prominent way with a labor organization, notwithstanding that organization was not involved in the strike. As I experienced my fourth blacklist dismissal the awful injustice of it arose before me as a vision of my family and the lost home came into my mind. I conceded the Northern Pacific the right to fire me with or without cause, but I did not concede the company officials the right to starve my family by interfering with me when I sought employment elsewhere. As I walked out of the office of the master mechanic of the Big Four, where I had just had my fourth experience, I was a desperate man, determined that this persecution must cease. I boarded the first train for St. Paul where the head offices of the Northern Pacific were located, and by the sheer force of determination gained entrance into the private office of D. K. Kendrick, general manager. I do not care to rehearse what transpired within the privacy of those four walls, suffice it to say that when I finally walked out of the office, I was a free man and the shadow of the spectre never crossed my path again, and from that time on the references of J. Harvey Reed were returned with an O. K. across the face.

Leaving the general offices of the N. P. that day at St. Paul I went to Duluth and got a job on a little road called the Duluth, Masiba & Northern that operated only during the summer, hauling iron ore from the mines to the Great Lakes. Here I remained, with a great number of other '94 men, until the frosty hand of winter shut down the operation of the road. At the close of the season the superintendent, in discussing strikes and strikers, remarked that thereafter he wanted ex-strikers, as the summer's work just finished indicated to him that these proscribed men represented the highest type of efficiency in railroad operation.

I decided now to put to a test the results of my late interview at St. Paul. I went to the Great Northern at St. Paul, and made application to Tom Patty, superintendent of motive power, for employment, at the same time submitting my reference. I got a job and in due time my Northern Pacific reference came back approved. I was sent to Devil's Lake, North Dakota, and in about three or four months was transferred to the Montana Central, between Helena and Butte, a distance of seventy-three miles over two mountain ranges and through five tunnels.

A WILD RIDE.

Everything moved along smoothly for six months until one Sunday morning with twenty-two loads I started out of Clancy, an up-hill climb to Portal tunnel, where we tip over and then have a steep down hill shoot to Boulder, a distance of nine miles. The center of the tunnel marks the apex of the grade, and from here, in either direction, there was a water grade to the portal of the hole where the grade suddenly increased. On this particular morning as we tipped over the hill I shut off and as we came into daylight at the portal of the tunnel, I made a gentle test application of my air to see that all was well. As the air whistled out through the valve orifice with its peculiar rush and the indicator hand dropped suddenly I realized that for some reason I did not have air connection with my full train. These details are matters of seconds, and when I realized that there was something wrong with my braking power we were already starting down the steep incline. The head brakeman was in the cab and I shouted to him to hike back to the hand brakes, as I pulled the whistle calling for brakes. I had also, with the assistance of the fireman, "thrown her over" (reversed the engine), but we were running away. The train crew heroically made their way over the wildly swaying cars of the train setting the hand brakes, but as the speed increased these brave boys had to lie down and cling to the sides of the running boards for dear life to keep from being thrown off, while the now madly dashing train with each revolution of its wheels increased its momentum. With every curve (and the road, like most mountain roads, was but a succession of curves) we expected that she would leave the rails and pile up out in the country. But on we went like a flying meteor, the clickety click of the rail joints, the hissing of steam from the open cylinder cocks, and the rushing roar of the train as it split the air sounded as a chorus of evil Imps chanting, in a sort of mad glee, a fiendish Death Song, while the fire flashes from the car wheels as they ground against the sharp curves appeared as the spiteful sputterings of the Evil One. Cold drops of perspiration stood out on our foreheads, and with blanched faces we were expecting to be grappled in the arms of Death. Still the train clung to the rails and our speed, if possible, increased. Boulder was at the foot of the grade and here we had a meet with an extra. It was the custom for the crew of the first train in at this point to set the switch for the sidetrack for the opposing train. As we got well along toward Boulder and still sticking to the track our minds, leaving the possibilities of the present, began to deal with the dangers that were ahead. Would the extra we was to meet be in the clear? Having the right of track, if she had the side track switch set for us, disaster was sure, for with our speed we could never hope to take the short curve at the switch and head in on the siding without piling up. As we came thundering down the hill nearing Boulder, we could not see the station until we were almost upon it, but when it did come into view, measure my relief, if you can, when I saw that the extra had not arrived and the main track was clear. The next instant we darted by the depot, and immediately striking an upgrade, we, nevertheless, run a mile and a quarter before we succeeded in bringing the train to a stop, and as quickly as possible backed down to the station and into the clear. As I then got down to examine the hot boxes and main pins to discover what damage the engine had suffered, the head brakeman showed up and in a tremolo voice inquired:

"What's the matter, old timer, can't you hold a train with twenty-two cars of good air?"

I replied, "Sonny, judging from the quiver in your voice, you are as badly scared as I am, but in the meantime examine that train line and see where that air is cut out."

He started with his examination and had reached the second car back when he found the angle cock closed, which had the effect of cutting the air out of the twenty cars back. Fresh mud on the dead woods where the closed cock had been found indicated some one had probably been stealing a ride here and had accidentally touched the cock lever with his foot, closing it.

In leaving Clancy our air had been tested and everything was fine, but dragging up the mountain, passing numerous mining camps enroute, miners often took the opportunity of climbing up between the cars and riding up the hill as far as they cared to go and then jumping off. Undoubtedly some one of these men had been the cause of our closed angle cock and our wild dash down the mountain.

A MISS AS GOOD AS A MILE.

It frequently happens in railroading that the stage is all set for a catastrophe but some trifle intervenes and saves disaster. Thus it was one day some months after the foregoing experience, that I was heading west from Boulder to Bernice. The track from Boulder west is a gentle up-slope to Bernice, but from here on to Elk Park the grade is extremely heavy. I had a light train and had orders to meet a freight train at Bernice. We had the right of track, and if we had followed strict procedure as to classification we would upon arriving at Bernice occupy the main line while our opposing train would take the siding. But we did not stick to our rights and thereby hangs this tale.

My long experience in mountain work had taught me some things, so when we came into Bernice and the other train had not showed up I told the head brakeman to head us in on the siding and thus clear the main line to the train that was coming down the "toboggan slide." As we came to a stop on the siding my conductor came running up and sarcastically inquired if I was not aware that we were entitled to the main line. I replied that there were lots of things that I knew and there were a good many that I did not know, but in this instance I was acquainted with our rights, but had decided it wouldn't do any harm to concede them to the other fellow in view of the fact that our train was light; we arrived first and it was no particular trouble to head into the clear. We hadn't got through our discussion when we heard "Sharkey Jim" of the meet train lustily calling for brakes away up the mountain side. It didn't require the rumble of his train for us to know that Sharkey had lost control, and he was then tearing down that mountain with the speed and force of a cyclone. A moment or two and his train came reeling at us with the gyrations of a drunken man, but with the speed of a cannon ball shot by us and on down the track to Boulder. Rights or no rights, Sharkey Jim and his crew had reason that day to thank their stars that we did not stick to our rights and head them in on the siding.

A COAL DEAL.

Coming down a ten-mile mountain grade from Woodville to Butte one evening just after dark in January, 1897, with a full freight train, my brakes proved defective and my train rushed out from under me. I called for the hand brakes and the conductor and three brakemen were soon busy, but to no avail. We could just manage to keep the train down to a reasonably safe speed. Hitting pronounced curves where the friction of wheels aided the braking power, we would get her down to twenty-five or thirty miles an hour, but hitting a straight track we would bound away at a considerably faster gait. Thus we went, into the Butte yards. As we proceeded through the yards, still out of control, a switch engine with three cars of coal occupied our track, and although we were giving them the back-up signal with the whistle, the switch crew did not notice us, and next thing we were into those cars with an awful impact. My fireman and I unloaded into the soft snow before our train went into the coal business. There was coal from those cars scattered all over that yard, making kindling wood of the cars and crippling both engines. These runaway incidents were frequent with all crews on this mountain division, but all did not turn out so fortunately, and many a poor fellow has ended his earthly career here riding a runaway.

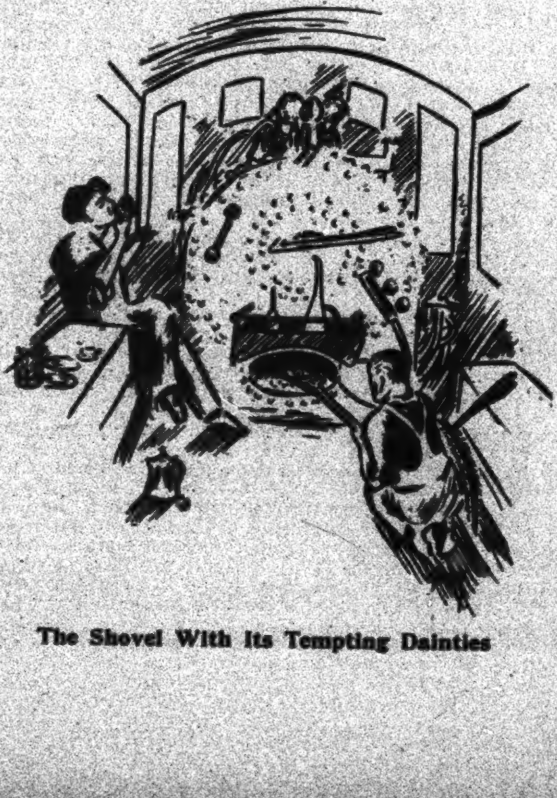
BUCKING SNOW.

In March, 1897, the main line of the Great Northern was having a hard fight with snow through the Rockies, and in the face of it all they got short on power. One day I was called and ordered to take an engine down to the main line at Harve. Arriving there they put a train behind us and shot us west. Neither myself nor fireman had ever been over the road before, the track was strange, the snow was deep, and it was hard sledding for us. We got the train as far as Concord, about fifty miles from Harve, but could get no further on account of the snow. We were then ordered to proceed with a caboose and "buck" snow. We soon learned while at this work that every cut meant a hard fight to get through. The cuts were all filled to their tops with a hard packed snow, and as some of these cuts were ten and fifteen feet deep, it can be imagined what we had to go up against when we rammed them. We were not equipped with any sort of snow fighting apparatus, and we had to depend solely upon the force of our impact to clear the track. We would get up the track about a mile from the cut to be attacked, we would then pull the throttle wide open and hook the reverse up, and away we would go. By the time we reached the snow bank we would be tearing off some speed, then kerchug we would go into the wall of snow. The force of the impact would drive the engine two or three car lengths into the drift, and the engine would be fastened in the grip of the snow so fast that it would then be necessary for the section crew to clear the snow out from our rear before we could get out and renew the attack. Thus we fought and fought for eighty-four long, continuous hours, without sleep, and with only three meals during the whole period. During this time we ran out of water as there was no tank within reach, we resorted to snow water. While the engine was embedded in a bank after a ram, the section men would shovel snow through the manhole into the tank, we would then force steam into the injection pipe and into the tank, which would melt the snow and thus we would get our water.

After our eighty-four hour siege, we reached Blackfoot where we fed our faces and turned in for rest. My fireman and I hit the hay and we slept for fifteen hours without batting an eye. Eighty-four hours without sleep doesn't seem so bad as I write it now, sitting by a snug fire, with my provender refrigerator well filled, but, gentle reader, if you had followed us day and night through the cold of a Montana blizzard, with hunger gnawing at your vitals, you would be ready to agree with me that it was far from being a Fourth of July picnic. In my forty-three years of railroading these were the hardest hours I ever put in.

CAMPING ON THE BOILER HEAD.

After resting we were assigned to a run between Kalispell, on the east slope of the Rockies, and Blackfoot, on the west. It was difficult railroading; all trains were hours behind schedule, occasioned by snowslides, wrecks, and general winter adversities in a mountainous region. One would start out of a station with meet orders at some blind siding ahead. He would make the point and there he would stick for eight or nine hours waiting for the other train. Being stuck at a blind siding far away from any human habitation for hours without food and with the bleak, cold winds of winter sweeping the landscape was not conducive to good humor—and I always am willing to stretch a point to remain good humored. A couple of these instances and I conceived an idea that really ought to entitle me to a niche in the hall of fame. We had been stuck on a blind for nine hours and I promised my fireman that never again would we be caught that way. Before going out again I went to a grocery and outfitted with a great supply of bacon, potatoes, onions, canned beans, coffee, butter, bread, and a lot of other stuff that would tend to gladden the inner man at critical times. We loaded our commissary onto the engine and the next time we were caught, we held the winning hand. A. E. Bodie, my fireman, (now a passenger engineer on the S. P. S. between Pasco and Portland), was installed as chef. Taking the coal shovel and washing it nicely at the foot cock of the tank, and thinly slicing some choice bacon which he would place on the shovel, with here and there pieces of sliced onion; he would have his fire in the box burned down nice and clean and then he would hold the shovel with its tempting dainties over the hot coals, and in a few minutes the bacon and onions would be cooked to perfection. A few potatoes placed in the dome cooks them to the queen's taste; then with some hot water drawn from the injector, and the shovel full of hot coals from the firebox placed on the shovel deck, we had an ideal place to brew our coffee, and the resultant amber-colored fluid was a drink for the gods and warmed the cockles of a man's heart as entrees we would have a can of French sardines with lemon juice as a relish, and a can of baked beans heated in a pail of water. Och, Louie, what a feast! and then the pipes and a good smoke, and then with



The Shovel With Its Tempting Dainties

the storm curtain down and the genial warmth of the boiler head radiating through the cab we would lay back on our cushions and doze, while our thoughts would wander away and away through enchanted lands, where the summer sunshine sifts through interlacing boughs, where perfumed zephyrs sigh and music throated birds entrance the listening air, and then, and then—we would be awakened from our dreams by the shrill whistle of our opposing train, and we would go our way with happy contentment perched on the pilot bidding defiance to all grouches. There's nothing like a well filled larder aboard an engine when one is railroading on uncertain schedules in a sparsely settled country in the winter time. When the grub baskets of an engine crew are tightened up to high C and there's plenty of tobacco in the old dudeen, it isn't so bad to get stuck on a blind siding for nine hours, after all.

SIDETRACKED.

In July, 1897, I had a little altercation regarding the merits of a train order with a dispatcher, in which I expressed myself in language a trifle more than poetic, and, as a result of this, I shortly received a curt note from the master mechanic informing me that I had a lay-off coming to me. I was tired of tobagganing the Rocky Mountains, anyhow, so I took my medicine without making a wry face and struck out for God's country and my home. My family had moved to Sunnyside, Washington, where I renewed acquaintance with them.

I remained here for several months until I was stricken with the longing for the smell of a boiler head, and I struck out for the South looking for a job. I brought up at Fort Worth, Texas, where I secured temporary employment on the Fort Worth & Rio Grande during the annual stock rush, covering some two months when thousands of head of cattle are shipped out of Texas. The animals are brought in from the great ranges of the panhandle and loaded on cars and shipped North, where they are sold, being distributed through the western farming states, and as far west as Nevada, where they enjoy a good summer range and are prepared for the fall market at Chicago. During this cattle shipping period Texas railroads are worked to the limit handling this enormous traffic.

Tracks are lined with cattle trains day and night, and every train crew is worked to the limit.

AGAIN ADRIFT.

The stock rush was now over, and packing my grip I struck out for old Mexico, going direct to Mexico City, where I secured a job on the Mexico National. Here I remained for something over a year, part of which time I was running a helper over the Salazar Mountains, about sixteen miles; the balance of the time I put in on a freight division between the old city and Tuluka, and then between Tuluka and Acranibro, and then on a branch between Acranibro and Passaquaro. Railroad conditions were about the same here as in our own country, and most of the officials were Americans, as were the engineers and conductors; brakemen and firemen being natives. This fact to the casual reader might appear as odd, but the fact is the Peon was never cut out by nature for railroading. I well remember that my fireman—and he was but characteristic of his race—used to show up on the engine for his run wrapped in a blanket which he would discard when he crawled into the cab. He would shovel coal all right, but here his ability seemed to end. I couldn't trust him for a minute to look after the water in the boiler, and even when we stopped to take water and I had spotted the engine at the tank I had to personally supervise the taking of water to see that we got a full tank, or else we were liable to go on with only a half tank full, as the fireman seemed to consider his responsibility ended when he pulled the spout down. He even could not be trusted to line up a switch when we, as a helper, had pulled onto the main line from a siding. In fact, these people appeared to be absolutely irresponsible and no amount of persuasion or discipline seemed to make them otherwise. While in Mexico, however, I was always nicely treated and for a while enjoyed the country. During my sojourn here, on one occasion, an engineer named Billy Whipple and myself went up to the capitol to meet President Profio Diaz. Arriving at the capitol we went to one of the guards—the state house being surrounded by a cordon of guards—we asked for the captain and when that dignitary appeared we explained who we were and stated that we desired the honor of an interview with his excellency, the president. The captain courteously bore our message to President Diaz and we were soon admitted to his presence. As we entered the great reception room of the capitol the president met us and cordially shook hands. As his hand and mine met I gave him the Masonic grip. As he noticed this his face beamed into a genial smile as he exclaimed, "Weno Americano, mucha weno, star weno, Americano Mesonica," at the same time cordially slapping me on the shoulder with his left hand. We had a pleasant twenty minutes with the president.

However pleasant some of the features of contact with the Mexican people might have been, nevertheless the chief characteristic of the Peon element appeared to be dishonesty. They appeared to look upon petty thievery as a virtue, and during my time in Mexico I didn't encounter a Peon who wouldn't steal anything that he could lay his hands on. Even my fireman was not exempt from this evil, and the devil would actually steal my overalls out of my box if I didn't keep a sharp lookout. It was a regular thing for the firemen and their companions to steal the brass oil cups or anything else that they could find a market for.

It is an actual and well known fact that in the old city there was what is known as a thieves' market, and here might be seen piles and piles of brass oil cups, switch locks, wrenches and tools of all kinds—bearing the brand of the railroad company, which had been stolen and disposed of to the keepers of the market. There is no law of replevin and once the goods got into the hands of a third party there was no recourse for recovery, and it is an actual fact that the company used to buy its own property back from these market people. I have known of all the brass bearings being stolen from a car left on a siding, and it was always imperative when we left a string of cars on a siding to take the slack out of the line so that the natives could not pull the links out of the couplings and get away with them. A Peon's wages was about twelve cents per day and as brass in that country commanded a high price, it only required an oil cup or a journal brass to represent several days' wages. The rubber air hose was also an object of considerable value in the eyes of the native. These he would steal and split open, and then placing a heavy weight on them for several days until they were pressed out flat, he would then cut them up and use them for sandals for his feet. The chambermaids would steal our clothing and any trifles left about our rooms. In fact, wherever one turned he encountered petty thievery, and as much as one may regret to so brand a people, candor impels me to repeat that dishonesty was the chief characteristic of the Mexican Peon.

In time I grew weary of Mexico and her people, and the red pepper food, and I longed for home and the starry banner, so, after some fifteen months spent in the country, I decided to return to the dear old United States and my Western home. So the day came when I bid good-bye to old Mexico and many good friends there and started back for the "home of the free and the land of the brave." On the train out were many American tourists homeward bound, and on our twelve hundred mile journey to the boundary between the United States and Mexico, we all became quite well acquainted and friendly. Arriving at El Paso we stopped just at the border line while the custom officials examined the baggage. Going out on the depot platform after I passed inspection, my first sight was "Old Glory" lazily floating in the breeze from a near-by pole. As I spied the old flag, on the sudden impulse of the moment, I took off my hat, and waving it violently I shouted my approbation of the flag as lustily as a good pair of lungs would permit. My shouting brought most of the passengers out of the cars, and some inquired the cause of my apparent enthusiasm and for answer I pointed to the flag, and then when the crowd espied it, everybody shouted their acclaim, and we all jumped and shouted and danced about the platform like a posse of fools—but there was really no foolishness about it, for we were all in deadly earnest.

From El Paso I deadheaded north and west over the Southern Pacific, taking a month for the trip between El Paso and Portland, Oregon. I would travel from division point to division point, stopping at each and sure to meet up with some chap with whom I had railroaded in days gone by.

I arrived at Portland on October 9, 1901, and at once secured employment on the Oregon Railroad & Navigation Company, in which service I was destined to remain for ten years, and incidentally end my long railroad career.

By now I had railroaded for more than thirty years, and the succeeding ten years in the employ of the O. R. & N. marked the most genial of my railroad experience. They are a fine bunch of fellows here, railroad men to the core. From general manager down there appears to be a bond of sympathy and goodfellowship between men and officials that I never found so much in evidence on any other road with which I have had experience. This fact tends to a high degree of efficiency, and has been a great factor in making this road noted for its excellent service and safety, as well as having much to do with the splendid returns made to stockholders.

But to get back to my tale. After my employment at Portland, I was assigned to the mountain division between La Grande and Pendleton, Oregon, where I remained for five months, when I was transferred to the Washington division with headquarters at Starbuck.

ARRESTED.

The only time in my life that the iron hand of the law has had me in its grasp was an occasion at Wallace, Idaho, where I was in jail one night for the space of twenty minutes on a charge of exceeding the speed limit as made and provided by an ordinance of that town. It was at midnight and we were switching in the yard, we had bunted a box car loaded with beer onto a sidetrack about a half mile long, and when the brakeman went to set the hand brake he found the chain had been broken and of course the brake would not operate, and the car kept on its way down the comparatively long siding at an ever increasing speed. When I took in the situation I followed the car with the engine hoping to catch up with it and prevent damage. So down through the town I went regardless of speed ordinances at about a thirty-mile an hour clip. I finally butted into the runaway all right, but owing to the knuckle of the coupling being turned, I could not make connections and was perforce compelled to give up the attempt. When I returned to Wallace the police nabbed me and took me to jail, but when I explained the circumstances I was at once set free.

What became of the car? Oh, it went on down to near the end of the siding where it rammed a string of box cars and created a great pile of kindling wood. and flooded the valley with beer.

KILLS A CHILD.

It was on this same Wallace branch one day at Lane station, when we backed into a siding to do some switching. There was a long string of box cars occupying the track and I butted into them in the usual manner, little realizing what the results were to be As a matter of fact, as we backed in, there was a little girl, aged about seven years, playing underneath one of the cars in the string and out of sight of the crew. When we struck the cars the child was caught under the wheels and her life crushed out. It was an awful blow to us of that crew when we picked the poor little mangled body up and tenderly bore it to the home of her parents. Blameless as we were, yet the memory of that accident is one of the saddest of my life.

KILLS AN OLD MAN.

It seems people cannot understand the danger of using a railroad track as a foot path. It is especially dangerous for elderly people and those who are hard of hearing. Thousands of people have been killed while walking on railroad tracks, and an engineer seldom makes a trip without encountering dozens of people along the track. Some have intelligence enough to step aside at the first sound of an oncoming train, while others appear to cling to the track until the last minute, forgetful that there is an anxious heart at the throttle watching their movements and fearful of a misstep or a stumble that will result in disaster. One who does not understand all there is to it might ask why you do not slow down when some one is seen ahead. Let it be understood that that engineer is running against time and he must make his schedule, that the track between towns is as a rule lined with pedestrians and if one slowed down every time he saw some one ahead he wouldn't get over the road in a week. So when the exception happens and one runs down a deaf person or one who is foolhardy, it is impossible to stop when the danger has become imminent.

Thus, one morning we were clipping along down a water grade with a five-car passenger train and had just reached the whistling post going into Colfax on the Moscow branch, when the fireman excitedly threw up his hands and shouted, "You will kill a man!" We were on a sharp curve and the track ahead was not visible from my side. However, at the cry of alarm I gave her the emergency and threw her over, but, as it proved, too late. We had hit an old man eighty-four years old who had been walking on the track just outside the rail and evidently had not heard our approach, and whom we did not see because of the curve. The old man was struck by the pilot and sustained injuries from which he died in a few hours. I mourn today poor old Johnnie Tabor, a grand old man.

A CLOSE CALL.

Well, well, well; sometimes I think we are here only because we're here. So many things happen in the course of a life time where death, with baited breath, is just aching to grasp us, it seems strange that we succeed in eluding him through a long span of years. A second, a minute or two, the span of a few moments, a turn of the head, a movement of the hand, a moment's heedlessness, and we are lost, or disaster has been averted, as the case may be. This especially is true in railroad life, where the merest trifle sometimes means so much. Here's an instance: I was on special, with running orders and right of track between L and W. I dropped down a nice grade, and was meandering along at about seventy miles an hour, and was just about to drop into the yard at W when a brakeman came running around a curve and flagged us down. When we got into the station we found an extra occupying the main line. The extra asked us who we were, and I replied that we were a special train with orders giving us the right of track. They indicated they were a westbound extra with rights over the same track to L. We then compared orders and found they lapped us—two trains running in opposite directions on the same track, both having equal rights, and each unknown to the other. It was the hair's breadth that surely saved us this time. The extra, as it happened, had stopped at W to reduce its tonnage by setting out a car, otherwise they would have been making a run for the grade at a speed of forty miles, as we, winding around the curves that mark this stretch of track, traveling at seventy miles an hour, would have been coming at them, and we would have met head on in a terrible collision in which the lives of many would have been crushed out without a moment's warning.

We were saved by a mere incident, and the space of a few moment's time. As it was, the extra standing at the depot, heard our roll and whistle and flagged us down. The dispatcher at his desk had overlooked his hand and had unwitting set the stage for a tragedy, but the hand of fate intervened and insisted upon a "Comedy of Error"—and, while I am grateful for the intervention, I could never appreciate the joke.

THE POOR DISPATCHER.

There is a burden of the gravest responsibility resting upon the faithful chap doing the trick at the dispatcher's key. A cool and level head with infallible judgment is demanded of him if he handles a train sheet. Others may err in judgment and may make mistakes, but to the dispatcher, working pawns of railroad service, these slips are not allowable. He must be Johnnie-on-the-spot, or death and destruction will follow in the wake of his error almost to a certainty. All honor to the chap at the trick, for to his credit be it said his errors are surprisingly few in spite of the inherent frailty of his human nature. While we note in this book an instance or two of the dispatcher's fault, do not overlook the fact that this book deals with a span of forty-three years of railroad life.

At midnight one Saturday night I was called for a special. My orders called for a run to W with a train of empty coaches; arriving at W we were to turn, and taking on an excursion party, run down the line to a lake where a picnic was to be pulled off. From the division point to W was eighty miles and the track, being a branch with only a regular train a day each way, and was supposed to be clear. We experienced a delay of one and a quarter hours in getting started, and once a going I had to whip up in order to make the run, turn, take coal, and be ready for the excursionists at six A. M. The orders called for a meet with extra 175 at W, so we had nothing to look out for. The old 85 was feeling as skittish as a colt as we pulled out for the run, and patting her on the back, I opened her up and told her to skit, and, she skitted. Mile after mile we reeled off to the tune of the Sailor's Hornpipe—it was really fine going in the early morning hours and I was drinking in the fresh ozone of the mountain valley, and feeling as happy as a clam. Skirting the foot of a hill on a water grade, I shut off and brought her down to a fifteen mile gait obeying a slow order for a weakened bridge that we were approaching. Crossing the bridge I had just opened her up again and was picking up my lost momentum, when we rounded a curve and there, staring me in the face hardly five car lengths ahead, twinkled the tail lights of a freight train standing on the main line at a blind siding. I almost felt sorry the way I yanked the poor girl back into the breeching. She groaned and moaned at the sudden yank I gave her, but like the old faithful hoss that she was, she did her best to stop, but that didn't prevent her from shoving her nose into the rear end of the caboose, carrying away the platform and otherwise spoiling the architectural symmetry of the car, while the old girl had her nose broken into smithereens—whatever that is. Of course, there was a jar something like an earthquake when we hit. In a moment, a big, round fat face peered out of the caboose door and sort of around the boiler of the engine until its eyes rested on me, when the big, round, fat face began to wrinkle and its eyes sort of twinkled, as its lips parted in a good natured smile, as it exclaimed, "Jerusalem! you woke us up nicely, didn't you?"

The big, good-natured face was the private property of a doctor at W, who had been down to the lake fishing and had caught the freight going home. He had been asleep in the caboose when it was rammed. It might be explained that the freight train was the one I had orders to meet at W, but it was running several hours late and was engaged in unloading some way freight when I bumped her. When the occurrence came up for review in the superintendent's office, of course, it developed that the dispatcher was at fault in giving a meet order for two trains traveling in the same direction; the freight conductor was also at fault for not protecting his rear with flag.

SAND IN MY CRAW.

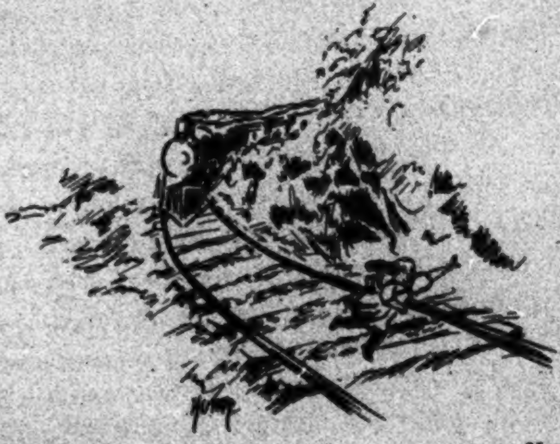
Well, well, we all make mistakes; I have made several in my time. I was running out on a branch, pulling a mixed train. We handled some heavy trains and it took a good deal of sand to make the round trip. After running out of sand on one trip I decided to carry an extra supply on the pilot. When I made my wants known at the round-house those imps of boys thought they saw a chance of putting one over on dad. They furnished me a liberal supply of sand all right and I had more than I had any use for before I got through with it. Those kids put the sand in an old barrel with sunlight beaming between its staves, they put the barrel on the pilot, and then to add to my troubles overflowed the barrel with the grit. I didn't notice the way they had the thing linel up, but when I had made my run, I noticed that my pony truck journals were about ready to go crazy with the heat, that that sand, sifted by the wind fanned by the fast running engine, into the bearings had created. As I bathed those hot journals and realized the devilment of those round-house kids, I would have done murder if I had had them within reach. When I next went back to the round-house I did not let on that I saw those greasy kids grinning at me from behind some engine—both my boxes and myself had cooled off in the meantime.

SOME INTERESTING EXPERIENCES.

I cannot close these pages without detailing several interesting experiences of some of the boys on the Washington division of the old O. R. & N.

FOURTEEN RUN OVER CHILD.

On August 16, 1910, train No. 25, Conductor W. R. Croyle, Engineer J. J. McCarthy, pulled out of Tekoa bound west with seventeen loads, eight hundred and twenty-five tons. After tipping the hill east of Seltice, they were running along at about twenty-five miles an hour, when rounding a sharp curve Mc-

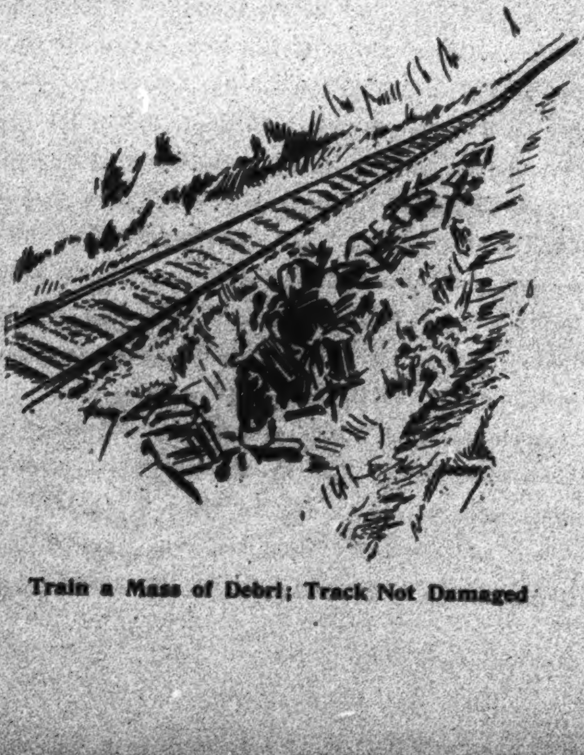


An Engine and Fourteen Cars Passed Over Her

Carthy saw a small child running down the track ahead of the train about ten car lengths in advance. Conductor Croyle happened to be riding on the engine, and as McCarthy set his air into the emergency, Croyle hearing the air stepped into the gangway thinking they were about to hit something. Just at the moment McCarthy called the conductor to his side, and it was just in time to see the little one go down beneath the pilot. Croyle jumped off the engine and run back as the train came to a stop, and found the little girl under the fourteenth car, uninjured save for a slight scalp wound. Never was there a happier train crew than assembled about little Leila Jones, all rejoicing in her miraculous escape from a terrible death.

DOWN MEEKER HILL.

Meeker Hill, on the O. R. & N., and down into the Snake River Valley, has been the scene of many a wild runaway, but of all the wild trains that ever dashed down this steep grade none ever equalled in speed and spectacular flight a freight extra on the night of November 28, 1890. The train was in charge of Conductor Frank McDonald, a young fellow named Joe Loechler, head brakeman, and H. W. Cameron (now a passenger conductor on this road), while Engineer Van Dresser and Fireman John Wilson constituted the engine crew. The train crew was new to the road and just before tipping over the hill with seventeen loads of wheat the conductor decided that the seven cars of air, with retainers set, was sufficient to hold the train. They tipped the hill and hardly had gone a train length before the engineer felt his control slipping, and the speed increasing to the danger point. He called for the hand brakes, and the two brakemen responded; the engine was in the back motion grinding on sand, the water brakes were working, and the two men on top were twisting hand brakes for dear life, but in spite of all the momentum increased and the wild ride was on in earnest. The conductor, seeing the hopelessness of the thing cut his caboose loose, while the swaying train rushed on. For seven miles she clung to the rails in spite of curves and the awful speed, when finally Brakeman Cameron, who was working from the rear forward and was just making his way to the fifth car, saw through the night that the cars ahead of him were leaving the track; it was only a moment and while he was standing upright, his own car gave a lurch and a plunge into the blackness of the night and went with its fellows into the ditch. All railroad men who saw



Train a Mass of Debri; Track Not Damaged the wreck agree that it was one of the most complete that any of them had ever seen. The speed at which the train must have been traveling when it left the rails can be imagined when it is stated that the track was not damaged in the least, save for the pulling out of a few spikes—the cars must have been literally treading air at the moment they left the track or they certainly would have carried much of it away.

The head brakeman was instantly killed, every bone in his body being broken; Rear Brakeman Cameron, thrown from the car he was riding as it left the rails to the track, sustained minor bruises and a broken ankle; the engine rolled over as it went down the embankment, crushing the life out of Fireman Wilson; while Engineer Van Dresser miraculously escaped with nothing more than a strained back. Every car went over the bank and piled up, the wooden parts forming a pile of splinters, while there wasn't an undamaged piece of iron in the mass of wreckage. While, as has been said, there has been many a runaway on this division of heavy grades, this one stands out conspicuous in the awful speed attained before leaving the rails.

ENGINE BLOWS UP.

One morning in the year 1910, train No. 44, consisting of engine No. 67 and two coaches, running between Wallula and Walla Walla, Washington, working along on quite a heavy grade half dozen miles west of Walla Walla, met up with a most unusual accident. The engine was working under usual conditions, with plenty of water in her boiler, when, biff! there was a sudden explosion, the engine became enveloped in steam, there was a ripping of rails, a

Her Boiler Exploded

bouncing along on ties and the train came to a stop. Johnnie Burns, one of the old-timers, was at the throttle, and Fireman English was wielding the shovel. Johnnie, with his eyes ahead, saw his smoke-stack go gyrating through the air and the sides of his engine boiler bulge out. It was all over in a second and one did not really have a chance to get scared until the danger had passed. An inspection showed that the boiler was simply "rotten" with age, and had arrived at the point when it must give way under the steam pressure, which it proceeded to do. The force of the explosion was forward and outward so that none of the crew was injured. The bell and parts of the smoke-stack were blown half a mile from the right of way. The accompanying photograph gives a very good idea of the wreckage.

CLOSE CALL FOR JIM.

While the Lewiston branch of the O. R. & N. was being constructed, James Morgan was in charge of the 70, which operated the construction train. One day as Jim was backing up the road at a 20-mile clip, between the towering rock walls on the one hand and the tortuous river on the other, his tender suddenly left the track and headed for the rocky wall on the left, while the engine toppled down the steep bank toward the river. Jim was precipitated from his seat in the cab to the very water's edge, where he struck, face down, in the wet sand, badly stunned. As soon as he in a measure recovered his senses the good old hog head's first thought was of his fireboy, and staggering to his feet he looked around for Joe Ramsey. The engine was lying on its side half way down the embankment and pionioned beneath the cab was the fireboy, with steam and hot water all about him. Jim hurried to the scene as fast as his tottering legs could carry him, and tried in vain to pull Joe out. Realizing that the boy would be cooked alive if something was not soon done for his relief, Jim got a shovel and dug a trench about the body so that the hot water would be drained away from the man. He then set to work to dig the victim out from beneath the wreck, which he succeeded in doing. Joe was unconscious and his

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full of sand that had penetrated the skin. s help arrived the injured man was taken to al and he soon recovered from his injuries w running an engine. Jim, beloved by all

Engineer James Morgan

who know him, is running passenger between Starbuck and Spokane.

BRIDGE GIVES WAY.

The sensation of falling from a considerable height is horrifying to most people, and a train going down with a big bridge is comparatively rare. At any rate, the falling of the Alto bridge with a freight train is one of the epochs in O. R. & N. train history.

It was on the 5th of August, 1894, when a train of sixteen loads left Alto—the summit of a steep grade—and started west down a more gentle slope. Engineer J. M. Jessee, better known as "Old Jess," had pulled his train down to the speed limit of six miles as he struck bridge 321, a big wooden structure, eight hundred and fifty feet in length and ninety-seven feet in height, spanning a dry gulch. Just as the engine struck the bridge Fireman John Roddy looked back along the train line, and noticed that Brakemen Dave Wright and Fred Harrison, having, just finished turning up the retainers, had met about midway of the train and had seated themselves on opposite cars and were facing each other, with their feet hanging down over the ends of the cars. "When the engine was about one hundred feet from the west end of the bridge," says Mr. Roddy in describing the incident, "and the train was all on the structure, we in

The Wreck of the Alto Bridge

the engine felt a sudden sinking under us. Engineer Jessee, being on the inside of the curve, looked down and saw timbers falling directly beneath the engine. He jerked open the throttle and the engine, responding on the impulse, broke away from the train and

Engineer J. M. Jessee

reached the dump as the great structure went down with a crash. As the structure went down bearing the heavy train, it carried the rails from under the engine and left her standing on the ties, with the engineer and myself on our respective seat boxes, while the tender broke loose and rolled down the hillside. As quickly as possible I jumped from the deck and run down the hill to look after the crew. The two brakemen from their position had fallen from the greatest height of the bridge. When I reached them, Dave Wright was sitting on a timber holding his left wrist in his right hand, he was conscious of his surrounding, and when I inquired how badly he was injured, said that he thought he was O. K. save for a broken wrist. Harrison was pinned in between the ends of two cars, and replying to my anxious inquiry, said he was not hurt at all—although it afterwards proved he was quite badly hurt in the back, but this was not discovered until he was released from his position between the cars some time afterwards. Conductor Watson was in the toilet of the caboose when she went down, and it was here I found him unconscious some time afterwards. The three men were sent to the hospital from where they all emerged in due time, none the worse for their awful experience. Examination proved that the bridge gave way from the bottom, the track remained on top of the heap and held four cars standing upright on their trucks; the other cars having been precipitated to one side."

Today the old caboose, minus its trucks, can be seen in the meadow just east of the bridge, and, though many years have gone by, the writer does not believe that a passenger train ever passes over the rebuilt structure but what some of the passengers can be heard reciting the story of the fallen bridge, while his listeners will shudderingly glance out the car window and allow their sights to wander dizzily down the trestle sides to the ground below where stands mute evidence, in the old caboose, of the truth of the story.

FINALE.

As my tale draws to a close an evidence of the uncertainty of human life and the pranks that fate sometimes plays with us, arises to accentuate what I myself have experienced. John H. Wright, better known as "Old Jackie" to his hundreds of friends, both in and out of railroad circles, had been railroading for forty years, running an engine on the Washington division of the O. R. & N. for more than twenty years, most of the time on passenger. He had experienced all the dangers and narrow escapes peculiar to his calling and long service without suffering any particular injury. In the late fall of 1911, Brother Wright secured a five days lay-off and a pass to carry him to Hood River, Oregon; and he started on his journey in perfect health and feeling mighty fine. He had to change cars at Pendleton, Oregon, and while he was standing on the depot platform talking to a friend his train started to pull out. Old Jackie made a run, grabbing the hand rail of the slowly moving coach, and in some way made a misstep and was thrown to the ground, both legs lying across the track were cut off. Tenderly the old Eagle Eye, who had had so much to do with moving cars, was picked up and borne to a hospital, where in spite of all he passed away, leaving besides his family, a host of mourning friends. It would have seemed more natural if poor Old Jackie had died at the other end.

RED WHEEL BUGGY GETS ME.

So it was with me. Fate had assigned me an unusually long railroad career, and intermingled with the forty-three years service, you, dear reader, must realize that I had really more than my share of "experiences" that point toward the Dark Portals. Yet I dodged the issue and escaped only to be caught finally, not beneath a locomotive in a great wreck, but actually beneath the wheels, as it were of a little red buggy on a wagon road. It would almost sound like a joke, if it were not for the tragedy of that old hip which renders me a life cripple. It happened this way: On May 17, 1909, I received a message from Wenatchee, Washington, announcing the death of my elder brother Charles. I had a fine run on the Connell branch at the time and although I was some 65 years old, was in robust health and as active as a kid. On receipt of the message I immediately secured a lay-off and hastened to the home of mourning. After my brother's burial I lingered with his bereaved fam-

Mr. Reed and His Wooden Side Rods

ily for a week, and I finally decided to return to my work. My brother's home was a couple of miles out of the city of Wenatchee, and on the day of my departure my nephew hooked a spirited team to the buggy and we started for town. We were driving along a narrow road with quite an embankment to the left, when we met an automobile. The horses took fright at the machine and plunged up the embankment, tipping the vehicle over, and violently throwing me to the roadside, where I landed with considerable force on my right side. The results to me were several fractured ribs, a dislocation of the right hip, a fracture of the neck of the femur, a decidedly painful period in a hospital, and finally, with a pair of wooden side rods, I am now hobbling about the world, with the thought uppermost in my mind of how curiously my railroad carrer was brought to a close.